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VODÚ CHIC: HAITIAN RELIGION AND THE FOLKLORIC IMAGINARY IN SOCIALIST CUBA

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, hundreds of thousands of Antillean workers – the majority Haitians – arrived in Cuba seeking employment in the expanding sugar industry of the newly independent Cuban republic. While some of these laborers returned to Haiti, many settled permanently in Cuba. How did Haitian migrants and their descendants integrate into Cuban society during ensuing decades?

Historically, Haitian laborers were marginal, disenfranchised, and occupied the lowest socio-economic status in Cuban society. Haitian spiritual practices were misunderstood and feared; even practitioners of other Afro-Caribbean religions such as Santería often characterized Haitian Vodú as diabolical, powerful, and potentially dangerous. Similarly, officials scapegoated Haitians to quell anxieties produced by the social and economic transformations in postcolonial Cuba. As economic conditions in Cuba worsened during the worldwide economic downturn of the 1930s, Haitians were targeted for summary deportations under successive regimes.¹ Until relatively recently, the maintenance of Haitian spiritual beliefs, music, dance, and language in Cuba were associated with rural isolation and poverty. Ethnographers who focused on these communities typically conceptualized them in terms of villagers in the mountains of the eastern provinces preserving their grandparents' picturesque or bizarre Haitian customs, including Vodú.²

Today however, the continuation of Haitian customs is no longer linked with isolation, but exactly the opposite: performance troupes, heritage festivals, art exhibitions, the circulation of religious specialists, collaborations with research centers and academia, endorsement by music promoters, and the tourism industry. In socialist Cuba, "folklore" is a valuable resource. Although some Cubans of Haitian descent hide their affiliation, others proudly claim

1. See James, Millet & Alarcón 1992, Lundhal 1982, McLeod 2000.

2. Including Pedro 1967. See also Corbea 1987, Guanache & Moreno 1988, James, Millet & Alarcón 1992.



Norberto, a member of the *haitiano-cubano* dance troupe Nago, performing the role of the *roi diable* during the 2009 Haitian heritage festival in Primero de Enero in Ciego de Ávila province.

their heritage and this inclination is growing. Policy makers and culture brokers both within the socialist state and internationally have begun to notice, valorize, and promote the arts and traditions of this ethnic subgroup. *Haitiano-cubanos* themselves have found innovative ways to transform the abject into the exotic, and are currently gaining a public voice in cultural production, particularly through folkloric performance. Also, Vodú is spreading across the island and emerging in Havana. Cosmopolitan practitioners of Santería in the capital have begun to study Haitian religion, perhaps as the final frontier of exotica available in a country where travel abroad is restricted.

In the staging of Cuban culture as folklore, spiritual practices expand and take on new meanings in front of wider audiences, becoming theater, art, entertainment, and cultural currency as well as expressions of devotion and technologies of communication with the divine. This essay examines the folkloric imaginary and the economy of folklore as a key process by which Haitians and their cultural practices came to be acknowledged as an element within Cuba's cultural mix. Rather than delve into the details of Vodú ritual practice in Cuba, I focus on the religion's changing public face. What forces have shaped the relationship of Haitians as an ethnic minority to national identity in Cuba? The "folklorization" of arts and religion has set in motion the formation of dance troupes, musical bands, heritage festivals, exhibitions, and publications. This "economy of folklore" creates new careers and novel opportunities for participants, as public arenas offer practitioner/performers new resources and new motivations to deepen their craft, share it, and identify it with a regional or national legacy, reshaping what it means to be of Haitian descent in Cuba. These transformations have come about through the visions and projects of various cultural agents, including performers, intellectuals, researchers, and members of *haitiano-cubano* communities.

HAITIAN MIGRATION TO CUBA

Cuba is unofficially separated into *occidente*, or the western region where Havana is situated, the central part of the island, and *oriente*, the eastern provinces. While Havana has been deemed Cuba's "Latin American" capital, Santiago, the second-largest city on the island, is known for its "Caribbean" character, because it has a multifaceted and distinctive immigration history and ethnic weave that differentiates it from Havana. It faces the Caribbean Sea and is much closer to Haiti and Jamaica than to the Cuban capital.

The eastern provinces of Cuba were host to two major waves of migration from what is today Haiti, one during the time of the Haitian Revolution and another in the early twentieth century. Both waves of migrants brought well-defined, and quite different, traditions that are still practiced in Cuba today. In this essay, I focus on the spiritual practices that arrived with the

agricultural laborers, or *braceros*, who came to cut sugar cane and pick coffee in the initial decades of the twentieth century when both industries were rapidly expanding in eastern Cuba.

Calculations of the numbers of migrants range widely. Labor recruiters paid bribes to circumvent quotas so real numbers were much higher than official statistics kept by consulates and port authorities.³ Also difficult to calculate is how many cane cutters and coffee pickers returned to Haiti versus those who settled in Cuba permanently. Historians and ethnographers (including Alvarez Estévez, Carr, Lundahl, McLeod, and Pérez de la Riva) have proposed figures ranging from fewer than 200,000 to more than 600,000, depending on sources and methods used.⁴ The Casa del Caribe research team that produced the monograph *el Vodú en Cuba* (James, Millet & Alarcón 1992) used algorithms based on the labor force necessary for harvest to arrive at a number of half a million Haitians.

How did the *braceros* fare in Cuba? When the laborers first arrived in Cuba, many lived in barracks and labor camps. Most planned to work for a temporary period in order to save money and return to their countries with the resources to marry or buy a farm. But, as with Manuel, the protagonist of Haitian novelist Jacques Roumain's classic *Masters of the Dew* (1978), who returned penniless to his native village after fifteen years in Cuba, the hoped-for opportunities did not always materialize. Because many sugar refineries or *centrales* paid workers using a system of company scrip that was redeemable only at company stores, inflated prices for basic goods were common. Most Haitian laborers were illiterate, and this hampered their skills at understanding and negotiating their contracts. Working conditions were complicated by periods of inactivity between harvests. Many laborers migrated internally between the *zafra*, or sugar harvest (most active from January to May) and coffee harvest (generally September to November) but still faced long periods with little work. Also, as workers gradually established themselves in Cuba, working small plots of land during periods of unemployment, acquiring livestock, forming relationships and marrying locally, returning to Haiti became an increasingly distant dream.

Throughout the Caribbean and the Americas, stereotypes of Haitians have been synonymous with poverty, illiteracy, contagion, and witchcraft.⁵ In

3. Lundahl (1982:29) notes, "Graft and trickery in the issues of visas and passports were common enough" and emigration taxes levied on the workers constituted an important source of revenue for the Haitian government.

4. Estimates for other Antillean workers, such as Jamaicans and Barbadians, range from 75,000 to 130,000. See James, Millet & Alarcón 1992 and Pérez de la Riva 1979.

5. For example, rumors of disease led Cuban authorities to set up quarantine stations to process incoming Antillean migrants. See McLeod (2010) and Casey (2012) for analysis of the racial and ethnic bias of public health policies, and also for discussion of witchcraft scares trumpeted in the Cuban press.

Cuba, they occupied the lowest rung of the social hierarchy. As commodity prices fell during the depression of the 1930s, laws favoring native workers were enacted in Cuba, and forced repatriations sent thousands of Haitians back to Haiti. Historian Barry Carr explains:

raids and deportations were initiated by the Guardia Rural [Rural Guard] ... antillanos, particularly Haitians, were tracked down in Oriente province by bounty hunters eager to collect the rewards that had been promised to those who helped in their capture. Candidates for repatriation were chosen arbitrarily. They included Haitians who were employed in the sugar or coffee sectors, as well as others who were small landowners. Many of the Haitian coffee cultivators in the Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo areas had lived in Cuba for over 15 years. Cases abounded in which deportees lost belongings, animals, and wages or other monies owed them. They often had to sell their earthly possessions for a song – providing juicy pickings for employers, merchants, and local functionaries ... Most of the deportees were not even allowed to alert their families or collect their belongings before being moved to deportation centers in Santiago ... Fidel Castro, then a seven-year-old Santiago schoolboy, recalled the sad spectacle of Haitian deportees leaving Santiago. (Carr 1998:106-7)

McLeod argues that repatriations of the 1930s forced many Haitians deep into the Sierra Maestra mountains and other inaccessible rural areas. He calls them “modern-day maroons” to emphasize their isolation (McLeod 1998:614). Joel James, José Millet, and Alexis Alarcón argue in *El Vodú en Cuba* that secluded and tight-knit rural communities helped Haitians and their descendants maintain their music, dance, festivals, spiritual practices, language, culinary, and farming customs. The authors also note that while Haitians faced discrimination, they were simultaneously admired, even feared, for particular skills. Coming from a country of land shortage and deforestation, they were accustomed to cultivating in tiny spaces like the shoulder of a road or a rocky hillside, and making do with few tools, often only a machete.⁶ Haitian migrants were nomadic, following sugar and coffee harvests from as far west as Ciego de Ávila province all the way to Guantánamo, so they brought news from other towns and provinces to the more fixed Cuban *campesinos*. Alexis Alarcón (1988) argues that their renown as storytellers, skills with medicinal herbs, spectacular festivals, and “strong” magic also functioned as defense mechanisms against bigotry. Historian Matthew Casey (2011) finds evidence of Cubans consulting Haitian ritual specialists for cures, noting that reputed healing abilities gave Haitians social status.

6. See Richman (2005) for a discussion of the pride taken by Haitian peasants in “inter-cropping” skills, for example growing corn or other food plants inside fields of cash crops.

Haitians continued to migrate to Cuba in the years surrounding World War II and during the turbulence of the Duvalier regime in the 1950s, albeit in much smaller numbers. Some of these emigrants were petty traders and merchants. When the Cuban Revolution in 1959 curtailed regular boat traffic between the two islands as the Cuban government distanced itself from the right-wing regime of François Duvalier, many lost contact with family members in Haiti.

The decade after the Revolution brought many changes to Cuba's Haitian heritage communities as the new regime focused on rural development through literacy campaigns, public health initiatives, new educational opportunities, and the expansion of infrastructure and services in rural areas during the 1960s. But interest in the arts and traditions of this ethnic minority was largely absent until the following decade.⁷ Beginning in the 1970s, professional dance companies sent research teams to visit the *bateyes*⁸ in rural sugar- and coffee-producing areas in order to learn Haitian music and dance traditions and adapt this repertoire for inclusion in their own choreographies. The 1980s saw a surge of interest by scholars in *haitiano-cubanos*. One particular research institution in Santiago province – the Casa del Caribe – began to conduct research in Haitian communities. Founded by an intrepid self-taught ethnographer named Joel James Figarola, the Casa del Caribe and its leader argued for a new vision of regional identity that included the contributions of Haitians. And efforts by people of Haitian heritage to bring their customs and spiritual practices to new locations, contexts, and audiences continue and multiply.

THE ROLE OF FOLKLORE IN THE SOCIALIST STATE

When Fidel Castro's guerilla army toppled the regime of president Fulgencio Batista and took power in January 1959, the new government took charge of a nation rife with social inequities and class and race disparities. Many citizens lacked access to basic health care and education. Illiteracy was high, particularly in rural areas. The revolutionary government undertook development projects and expansion of social services. After the Revolution, Haitians resident in Cuba were given citizenship and they and their families benefited from the new initiatives.

7. Two essays by Alberto Pedro Diaz profiling the customs of Haitian immigrants in the province of Camagüey published in *Étnología y folklore* in 1966 and 1967 are notable exceptions.

8. A *batey* is a term used in the Spanish Caribbean to refer to workers' quarters near cane fields or sugar refineries. Today, many Haitian descendants still live and work near sugar towns. In rural zones of coffee production, the clustered homes of Haitian descendants tend to be referred to as *bateyes* as well.

The government also sought to integrate previously disenfranchised sectors of society through the arts. Havana had an internationally recognized ballet. Now, the socialist “new society” would also have a folkloric troupe of the highest quality. Ethnomusicologist Katherine Hagedorn (2001) describes how the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional was founded in 1962 to represent the nation’s Afro-Cuban heritage, turning the performance traditions of marginalized communities into national symbols. From the beginning, the company performed not only secular dances such as Cuban rumba, but also choreographies drawing from Afro-Cuban religious rituals. By staging black spiritual practices in an acceptably secular format, the new socialist regime could affirm and valorize Cuba’s creole racial mix.

While Fernando Ortiz, the “father of Cuban ethnography,” organized performances of Havana-based Santería and Abakuá drumming and rituals to accompany his public lectures as early as the 1930s, only after the socialist revolution was folkloric performance funded and professionalized on a widespread basis. During the early 1960s, the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional became a national symbol, and soon thereafter regional counterparts were founded, or existing groups, like Folclórico de Oriente in Santiago, were reorganized and reinvigorated across the island. These folkloric ensembles often recruited members among knowledgeable percussionists and dancers from Afro-Cuban recreational societies or religious communities. Armed with training in modern dance, theater, and performance technique, graduates of new art academies such as Escuela Nacional de Arte (ENA) in Havana were sent to develop cultural activities throughout Cuba. Many were assigned as producers, directors, and choreographers for new folkloric companies.

A prominent “economy of the arts” grew under the new regime in Cuba. Government-funded cultural centers providing programming, events, and youth activities were constructed even in tiny villages. The socialist state sought to showcase the unity of its multiracial society through vigorous promotion and funding for sports, the arts, and *grupos folklóricos* – typically staged manifestations of Afro-Cuban cultural activities. Flourishing cultural and artistic expression confirmed that the socialist regime could create a better society. Race and class inequalities were being overcome; arts were no longer the domain of the bourgeoisie. In Cuba, even peasants, tobacco factory workers, or bricklayers would be participants in civic life. And the role of the island’s African-descended population in the formation of national identity was publicly performed in the arena of “folklore.” Rather than being an uncertain or precarious occupation, performing arts became a secure profession, as professional musicians, dancers, and choreographers became salaried employees of the state. Eventually, a Ministry of Culture, a union of writers and artists (UNEAC), and a range of municipal bureaucracies and arts cooperatives were formed to certify the various ranks of professional performers and also to oversee and distribute resources to *aficionado* (“enthusiast”) groups, including *portadores* (“heritage performers”).

At the time of the socialist revolution, the music and dance of Haitian heritage settlements were largely unknown to urban Cuban audiences and were not recognized as valid ingredients in Cuba's "ethnic stew" of artistic traditions on a national level.⁹ However, a few researchers, event producers, and other culture brokers began to notice these art forms and appreciate their potential.

One of a cadre of influential postrevolutionary cultural producers in Santiago province is Antonio "Toni" Pérez Martínez, who directed the Folclórico de Oriente from 1972 until 1991, and is currently the Artistic Director of the Casa del Caribe. Toni Pérez graduated from the ENA in 1971 and was assigned to Santiago province to help Folclórico de Oriente expand and professionalize. He realized that the troupe had a limited repertoire and decided to focus on developing new choreographies that would distinguish it from Havana's Conjunto Folklórico Nacional.

Town and city dwellers in Cuba sometimes trekked to rural areas for seasonal work during the sugar-cane or coffee harvests. Many of the dancers from the Folclórico de Oriente were from poor families and had grown up working as seasonal cane cutters or coffee pickers in Haitian communities and were therefore familiar with Haitian language, music, and festivals. Toni Pérez remarks that they were thus able to "enter that world, which was a closed world. At that time, the Haitians manifested their traditions only inside their own communities ... I'm talking about the 50s and 60s, before Haitians [in Cuba] were doctors or engineers ... things have changed since then."¹⁰

Pérez believed that Folclórico de Oriente should shed the mindset that Cuban folklore consisted of rumba and dances based on Santería religious rituals, traditions originally from western Cuba. He recounts how the group pushed into new territory, establishing a vision of regional identity that included Haitian traditions.

It was September of 1972 and I had been in Santiago for only a month when Folclórico de Oriente was invited to perform in Havana in December. The group had practically no repertoire and it was already September. So I said: "Well, what will we do? We have a two-hour show to do at the Mella Theater in Havana and we have no repertoire." We had a few tidbits of rumba, some vignettes based on Santiago carnival, and that was that. One of the members of the group says, "When my family used to go to Barrancas to pick coffee, we watched the Haitian dances in the evenings." The guys began to sing and move and say "I think the step goes like this..." and I realized that between

9. The seminal Cuban ethnographer Fernando Ortiz (1940) characterized Cuban culture as an *ajiaco*, a stew made from various ingredients with each item contributing to the flavorful whole.

10. My translation from an interview conducted on December 15, 2008 in Santiago de Cuba.

all of them they had clear memories of what they had seen, and that we could create a show from their notions of what the dance looked like. I also remember there was one person who said, “Yeah, but this is a Haitian thing, can we arrive in Havana with this? It’s Haitian culture and has nothing to do with us.” And I said, “What is our culture? That is, who are we?” Well, we presented ourselves in Havana with *gagá*, a Haitian dance, and *chancletas*, a local country dance.¹¹ Tremendous success in Havana. That was in December of 1972 at the Teatro Mella, tremendous success. Because the public was seeing something different. The Havana public was eager to see new things. *Gagá* made an impact. The national press supported the show. When we returned home after 15 days in Havana, we began to take a good look at ourselves, our local traditions. We realized that we have tremendous vitality in Oriente. We have a vast field in which to research and work, and so far the group has continued in this direction.¹²

Pérez formed teams to research “authentic local folklore.” The village of Barrancas mentioned in the vignette above is a *batey* of sugar cane cutters near the town of Palma Soriano in Santiago province. Locally known for its striking processions, the *gagá* band from Barrancas had been invited to parade in the carnivals of nearby towns for years.¹³ Guided by Folclórico de Oriente member Berta Armiñan, who had grown up accompanying her family to work the sugar-cane harvests in Barrancas, Pérez and his team spent a month in the village, living in tents, learning musical and dance traditions. He reminisces, “We realized that here was a marvelous world for us to dis-

11. Spelled *rara* in Haitian Creole, the dance glossed as *gagá* in Spanish is traditionally performed during Holy Week in Haitian heritage communities in Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Much like their counterparts in Haiti, *gagá* bands in Cuba form processions and march around showing off skills such as fast footwork, fire-eating, juggling machetes, walking across broken glass, or lifting and balancing heavy objects in the air using only the teeth, including tables decked with glasses of liquid. Cuban ethnographer Joel James remarked that the *gagás* he observed in the village of Barrancas in the 1980s included theater and social commentary, such as skits about the police or the rural guard trying to capture a Haitian, who, playing the clown, fooled them, and escaped (James 1996). While *gagá* is overtly a festive secular *comparsa* or procession dance, it is also observably linked with spiritual practices. *Gagá* celebrations culminate with a bonfire setting ablaze a straw-stuffed burlap “devil,” accompanied by elders’ libations and prayers, to drive bad omens from the community. For more on *gagá*, see Viddal 2010. For an excellent monograph on *rara*, see McAlister 2002. The second dance Pérez mentions, *chancletas*, is a dance of Iberian origin featuring wooden sandals that clack against the floor.

12. My translation from interviews on December 15, 2008 and April 29, 2009, in Santiago de Cuba.

13. Cuban municipalities generally organize their carnivals to coincide with traditional feast days pertaining to the historical patron saint of the town.

cover, from the standpoint of the spiritual and cultural wealth they possessed. We had an obligation to begin to cherish these traditions and see them as our part of our regional heritage, to be able to bring them to the stage.”¹⁴ Pérez recounts that he invited people from Barrancas (and eventually other communities as well) to the city, sometimes in groups of three, four, or five, to give classes and teach. They lived in the homes of members of Folclórico Oriente for a fortnight or a month. The Haitian communities began to notify Pérez and his team when feasts, festivals, or religious rituals occurred, inviting them to attend. After adapting the *gagá* processions of Holy Week for Folclórico de Oriente, Pérez added Haitian merengue. He also eventually created choreographies based on dances, movements, gestures, and salutations he witnessed during Vodú rituals, but this came later.

Pérez was influenced by the work of a famous Soviet choreographer, Igor Moiseyev. The Moiseyev school focused on bringing the technical preparation of the classical dancer to popular folk performing arts. It took elements of village arts and adapted them for the stage, with drama, technique, and contemporary design.¹⁵ Discussing the process of modifying festive traditions and spiritual practices into folkloric performance for the stage, Pérez remarks, “They did it [*gagá*] in their manner; it was a bit diabolical, we’ll put it that way. What I mean is, it was suffused with their witchery and conjuring. These were isolated communities, even looked down upon by the same Cuban, the same black Cubans, who lived in their areas. At the time there was no vision, no visual blueprint, for how to stage these traditions as art, as a national art.” He continued, “Well, the goal was to bring this to the stage as a technically sophisticated professional piece, not to repeat exactly what they were doing in the village, but bring it as a performance.”¹⁶ It is worth noting that *gagá* band members from Barrancas had themselves already modified their Holy Week *gagá* processions into formats appropriate for carnival parades in nearby towns.¹⁷ Also, by the 1970s, even people living in rural areas would have had exposure to state-sponsored cultural projects that adapted local customs into folklore shows. We should not assume that during early collaboration between Folclórico de Oriente and *Gagá* de Barrancas, the professionals of Folclórico de Oriente were the only active partners in adapting local traditions for the stage.

14. Interview December 15, 2008, my translation.

15. Pérez was later able to travel to the Soviet Union to apprentice in Moiseyev’s company and to complete a Masters degree, returning to Santiago afterwards to continue working with Folclórico de Oriente. For more on Moiseyev’s legacy, see Shay 2002.

16. Interview April 29, 2009, my translation.

17. From a conversation with Alfonso Castillo Pol, a leader of the *Gagá* of Barrancas, January 14, 2011.

Toni Pérez commented on changes he perceived in the Haitian communities after the socialist revolution and how these trends supported the formation of performance groups:

The Revolution changed a lot of things. The children of these Haitian workers in the *bateyes* began to get scholarships. They attended trade schools, universities ... there they mixed with the sons and daughters of industrial workers or of Cuban peasants or whomever. They begin to share their dances, songs, and customs in *aficionado* [hobby] clubs. On holidays they went back to their communities, so they did not lose their language, did not lose their customs ... And those same students, *pichones*¹⁸ as we called them, also began to communicate and network amongst themselves.¹⁹

While professional folklore troupes began to incorporate Haitian material into their repertoire in the 1970s, families and communities of Haitian heritage also began working with culture officials to form state-supported performance groups. These are categorized as *portador* groups – heritage performers or cultural stewards. Maria del Rosario Quintana Matos, employed during the 1970s as a dance instructor at the local *casa de cultura*, explained that at the time there were no folkloric groups in the area of Las Tunas. She approached members of “Bella Flor de Fleitas,” a *gagá* band that paraded in local *bateyes* during Holy Week, about creating an artistic performance group.²⁰

In 1976 a company was formed under the auspices of the municipal culture office, directed by Silvia “Titina” Hilmo Sandy, a ritual specialist and the matriarch of a large family, many of whom were active in the group. They named the company Petit Dansé. At first they danced *libre* or freely, as they would at home in the village; later there was rehearsed choreography. Del Rosales Quintana noted that at first the project was not well accepted. The public in Las Tunas was not used to seeing performances that included lying down on broken glass or throwing machetes; it seemed too “barbaric.” However, they eventually became enthusiastic.

Titina’s grandson Carlos explained that at first the group presented ostensibly secular dances like Haitian merengue, country polkas or minuets, and *gagá*. Later, Titina began to adapt dances from sacred occasions to the stage.

18. *Pichón* means chick or baby bird in Spanish. Although it can be used to refer to Cubans of any heritage, it has been more typically used to designate Cubans of Haitian, Jamaican, or other West Indian heritage. While some consider it derogatory, others insist that it is merely slang. I found it common for people within the Haitian heritage community to use it offhandedly. See Moore 2008 and Hume 2011 for a discussion of the term’s pejorative connotations.

19. Interview December 15, 2008, my translation.

20. Interview February 24, 2010, in Las Tunas.

Performer José Gabriel “Gravier” Spret Expriet, a seasoned drummer and dancer, was recruited to become a consultant and instructor for Folclórico Oriente in Santiago. Carlos notes that Gravier eventually became one of the “great voices” disseminating Haitian culture in Cuba. Gradually, *haitiano-cubanos* marshaled folklore as their own resource (not waiting to be “discovered” by professional programmers or ethnographers). Today, remarked Carlos, troupes presenting Haitian traditions are on the increase, there is even an ensemble performing Haitian-based choreographies at a beach hotel in the resort town of Guardalavaca in nearby Holguín Province.²¹

VODÚ AND THE CASA DEL CARIBE

Actor, dramaturge, and historian Joel James Figarola was active in post-revolutionary Cuba’s new cultural movements and eventually founded the Casa del Caribe in the city of Santiago de Cuba in 1982, an institute devoted to researching and presenting local culture. He remained its director until his death in June 2006. While a number of institutions devoted to the study of Cuban history and cultural identity were founded after the Revolution, the Casa del Caribe has been distinctive in its promotion of Cuba’s bond with the Caribbean, its interest in migrant communities in *oriente*, and its role as a producer and promoter of performance arts, sometimes through unorthodox means. It is an institution with a twofold mission: engaging both in cultural production and academic research. That is, the Casa del Caribe produces festivals and events that feed on research by the institution and vice versa. This emphasis on performance shaped the spread of non-institutional religions, including Vodú, into the Cuban public space.

Before the founding of Casa del Caribe, James directed the Department of Dramaturgy and Programming of the Cabildo Teatral in Santiago.²² During this time, in the late 1970s, a number of people involved in experimental theater in Santiago were eager to include local tradition in their artistic productions. They wanted to create a form of theater compatible with socialist ideals and congruent with Cuba as an “Afro-Latin”²³ nation. Avoiding presenting

21. Interview February 24, 2010, in Las Tunas.

22. The name “Cabildo Teatral Santiago” for the collective connotes a brother/sisterhood of theater people, or guild. Historically, *cabildos* were mutual-aid and recreation associations formed by enslaved Africans in colonial Cuba, based on *cofradías*, the brotherhoods or guilds of medieval Spain. Later, the word became attached to a variety of organizations based around a common vision of ethnic pride or fraternity.

23. Fidel Castro first referred to Cuba as an “Afro-Latin” nation during Cuba’s involvement in Africa, specifically during a speech about Angola in April 1976 (see Ayorinde 2004, Moore 1988).

conventional European masterpieces or repeating North American trends, they looked instead to popular culture for inspiration and material (Alarcón 2007). Joel James and members of his theater group were invited to Carifesta, which was held in Havana in 1979.²⁴ For the first time, they saw a variety of performance troupes from other Caribbean nations. They set out to organize a similar event in Santiago. From the beginning, including marginalized sectors of Cuban society such as the Haitian laborers and their descendants were part of the objective. James organized Santiago's first "Festival de las Artes Escénicas de Origen Caribeño" (Festival of Caribbean Performance Arts) in 1981. Later known as the Festival del Caribe and Festival del Fuego, the event has taken place every year since.

Alexis Alarcón, one of the co-authors of *El Vodú en Cuba* (James, Millet & Alarcón 1992) recounted this story, which takes place during the early days of the Casa del Caribe project and illustrates the budding recognition of Haitian religion.²⁵

Joel wanted to observe rural traditions and I had family in the coffee-growing region around the village of La Caridad in the Sierra Maestra mountains, so I invited him to spend a weekend in the countryside visiting the farm where I grew up. We were walking back to my father's house after a night of watching drumming, dancing, singing, and possession trances. Joel said to me, "Alarcón, this is a goldmine!" I responded, "What goldmine?" He replied: "This! These cultural expressions we have witnessed. We have to document this!" Really, I was unsure what he was referring to. A former batey – a cluster of thatch-roofed houses belonging to a group of Haitian-descendants – was located right next to my family's farm. In previous decades, the Haitians had been laborers on local coffee plantations. After the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, the residents of the batey worked for the agricultural cooperatives that replaced large-scale land ownership, and also tended small private gardens. I had grown up next to the Haitian community. Their drumming and rituals were ever-present. Many Cubans, whether of African or Spanish descent, included revelry and music in their religious practices, including folk Catholics, Spiritists, and adherents of Afro-Cuban religions such as Santería. I didn't see my father's neighbors as something unique. But Joel had a consciousness of the importance of these cultural expressions. He believed that strengthening local culture was

24. A festival organized under the auspices of CARICOM that gathers artists, musicians, and writers to promote the arts and folklore of the Caribbean. See www.carifesta.net for more details.

25. The account I offer here is a translation compiled from interviews on April 30, 2009 and April 28, 2010. Alarcón also tells this story in a published interview: "Joel James y el camino de los luases" (2007).

a way of strengthening national culture. During our next visit, he asked some of the members of the community to bring their instruments over and the sons of Haitian-born Nicolás Casal played drums at my father's house. Joel explained that what we were seeing was Vodú, the Haitian religion we had read about in books by Courlander and Metraux. He talked about the possibility of organizing a group of Haitian descendants from La Caridad into a performance group and inviting them to events in the city.²⁶



Grupo Folclórico La Caridad at the 2008 Festival del Caribe.

Joel James and his team are often credited with “discovering” the magnitude of Haitian cultural influence in Santiago Province. Until the inquiries promoted by the Casa del Caribe, Cuban ethnographers interested in the island's black heritage had largely focused on the provenance of cultural elements brought by African slaves. Ethnographers and historians had theorized that the origins of the religion called Santería lie in what is now Yorubaland in Nigeria, speculated about surviving “Congo” cultural practices from Central Africa, and located the ancestral home of the Cuban Abakuá secret societies

26. The group from La Caridad made its debut at the 1983 Festival del Caribe and continues to participate.

in the Cross River region of what is now Calabar province in Nigeria. Studies of the influence of various regions of Spain on Cuban customs and idioms were also abundant.²⁷ Few researchers, however, had been interested in the contributions of hundreds of thousands of Haitian laborers who arrived in eastern Cuba in the early twentieth century. While James was not the only intellectual to investigate Cuba's Haitian heritage, he was a key figure. He publicly promoted and valorized this ingredient in Cuba's "ethnic stew."

James taught his cohort of actors, dramaturges, and theater producers to become grassroots anthropologists, known for their immersive style of fieldwork. Rarely did they conduct formal interviews or take notes visibly. Instead, researchers were encouraged to submerge themselves in the everyday lives of the communities they were studying. He mused: "We tried to live as they lived, drink what they drank, eat what they ate" (James 2007:109; my translation). Eventually, the team attended hundreds of rituals in different parts of eastern Cuba (Alarcón 2007). Notably, folklore has functioned as a vector of social change. Contact with ethnographers and opportunities for public performance have created new contexts for Vodú.

MAGICAL PERFORMANCE IN AN ATHEIST LANDSCAPE

The activities of the newly formed Casa del Caribe, with its intrepid and largely self-taught research teams, were not without controversy in the early years. The Revolution was officially atheist and did not support religious expression. Authorities tried to minimize mass gatherings outside of officially recognized events. While many Cubans continued various spiritual practices and retained a sense that the aid of the spirit world was important to health, prosperity, luck, and happiness, the regime believed that socialist education would gradually fade beliefs in magic and religion into acceptable folkloric renderings of former spiritual fervor. As the Casa del Caribe endeavored to present and showcase Caribbean performance arts, producers asked local practitioners to stage their spiritual traditions for the public, with the understanding that they would omit ritual secrets or knowledge meant only for the initiated.

Putting Vodú on the stage in 1983 caused a stir. Founding Casa del Caribe researcher Abelardo Larduet remembers, "The Party made a fuss. The Ministry of Culture was less problematic; at least intellectuals ran it. But people from State Security came to the first Vodú ceremony and discussed stopping it. Joel had to fight some battles."²⁸ Alexis Alarcón confirms, "There was tension with the authorities, who had a hard time understanding Joel's ideas. But he was irascible and told the government and the Party to let him

27. See for example Cabrera 1992, Lachatañere 1961, Ortiz 1929, 1950.

28. Interview, February 14, 2009, in Santiago de Cuba, my translation.

work. He asked the authorities if they wanted the drums drumming in favor of the Revolution or against it.”²⁹

James’s commitment to not only including the Haitian heritage groups but making them a central element of each festival bewildered many. He recounts, “There came a time when it seemed like the idea of the festival would shipwreck. People asked things like, ‘what the devil are you doing with these Haitian things?’ But, they helped us anyway.” During the early years many local intellectuals were appalled by what the Casa del Caribe presented. However, they were also bowled over by the emotional impact of the performances and events. James (2007:109) recounts, “They were surprised that these things, which they had considered marginal, of the uneducated, were so rich and could stir them” (my translation). Larduet remembers, “The Casa del Caribe brought the Haitian groups to Festival del Caribe, and people were surprised to see how prevalent and strong these communities were. Cubans had thought of themselves as Latin American, but our Haitian heritage communities reflected Cuba’s Caribbean-ness.”³⁰

Even after the festival achieved prominence in the ensuing years, the road was sometimes rocky. When Casa del Caribe partnered in creating a documentary profiling a Haitian community in the municipality of Palma Soriano in Santiago province, the Communist Party of Palma Soriano protested Casa del Caribe’s efforts. Although the documentary *Huellas*³¹ later won first prize at a film festival in Moscow, in Cuba local prejudices had yet to be overcome (James 2007).

The Casa del Caribe continued its mission to dignify popular culture in front of the Cuban public, and James recognized additional benefits, “I believe we have also increased the self-esteem of the participating groups.” Two of the Vodú priests who collaborated in the filming of *Huellas*, the brothers Pablo and Tato Milanés,³² have since become sought-after spokespersons on Vodú. James (2007:113) suggested, “Pablo is not the same person, Tato is not the same person, in terms of their relationship with their own spiritual system, and their relationships with the lay public” (my translation). The Milanés brothers have since traveled throughout Cuba and been invited abroad as members of Cuban delegations to folk festivals in Haiti, Brazil, and Curaçao. In November 2008, Pablo Milanés was invited to offer a Vodú invocation at the “Cuba em

29. Interview, April 28, 2010, in Santiago de Cuba, my translation. The anecdote also appears in “Joel James y el camino de los luases” (Alarcón 2007).

30. Interview, February 14, 2009, in Santiago de Cuba, my translation.

31. The film, released in 1986, was directed by Roberto Román González and produced by Estudios Cinematográficos de la TV Cubana, with Casa del Caribe consulting. *Huellas* means “footprints” or “traces.”

32. Not to be confused with the Latin Grammy-winning Cuban singer-songwriter also named Pablo Milanés.

Pernambuco” festival in Brazil. Mounted by a spirit, he fell to the floor and ran sharp machetes across his body without injury: a cultural ambassador from a socialist realm offering a magical spectacle of trance possession.



Vodú priest Pablo Milanés Fuentes at the 2008 Festival del Caribe.

The Casa del Caribe's projects initiated exchanges between different collaborators. Members of folkloric groups got to know each other and spend time together in the context of the Festival. Although there had always been communication and interchange between the various Haitian communities, the Festival was a further opportunity for them to strengthen ties, exchange information, and work together. The Festival has been an important factor in motivating Haitian descendants in *oriente* to maintain their customs.

THOMPSON: REGGAETON OR GRANDMA'S VODÚ?

Although I first visited Cuba in 1998, it wasn't until graduate school that I was able to spend extended time on the island. Between 2008 and 2010, I lived in Santiago de Cuba for fifteen months and traveled to towns and villages throughout the eastern provinces to attend events, festivals, and religious ceremonies linked with *haitiano-cubano* communities.³³ Since my previous research indicated that folkloric troupes are a significant vehicle for valorizing *haitiano-cubano* culture, I collaborated with performers specializing in Cuba's Haitian heritage. I also met practitioners of Vodú and attended rituals. Scholars, research institutes, festival organizers, and other culture brokers helped me understand how Cubans of Haitian descent have or have not been formally integrated into the national imaginary, as well as how policymakers have officially studied, ignored, discouraged, or sponsored *haitiano-cubano* cultural practices.

When I visited small towns in Santiago province with concentrations of Haitian descendants, I was surprised to see how many communities had amateur folkloric dance and drum troupes. In the village of Thompson, I counted more members in "Grupo Folklórico Thompson" than children enrolled in its tiny one-room school. Many villagers spent their leisure time practicing and perfecting songs, rhythms, and dance steps. I found devotion to the calendar of Vodú rituals valued both as an expression of the troupe's authenticity and as a spiritual bond that knit the community together. Troupe membership prompts thoughtful consideration of how to perform dance steps or drum sequences, the meanings of words and songs, and focuses new generations on improving their execution of these Haitian customs. Salsa, reggaeton, rap, and other popular genres hold less sway, as does absorption into more prevalent Cuban spiritual traditions such as Santería. Today, folkloric groups – initially sponsored by culture programmers and institutions, later springing from the efforts of *haitiano-cubanos* themselves – are a key aspect in both maintaining and popularizing Haitian identity and culture in eastern Cuba.

33. I first visited Cuba to participate in a two-week dance program hosted by a professional folkloric troupe, the Ballet Folklórico Cutumba, and returned annually over the next decade.



Grupo Folklórico Thompson parading in the 2008 Festival del Caribe.

WITH THE SPIRITS AT THE MILANÉS'

Brothers Tato and Pablo Milanés, whose father emigrated from Haiti in the 1920s, are prosperous farmers who live in the Sierra Maestra mountains in eastern Cuba. They are also well-known priests of Vodú. Although Tato lives on a mountaintop farm with no electricity, plumbing, or vehicle (besides his horse), clients from as far away as the capital seek him out for consultations. In October 2008, accompanied by colleagues from Casa del Caribe, I visited him. Arriving disheveled after crossing two rivers and revving up a twisty mountain trail in the institute's jeep, we found a youth in low-slung jeans, gold chains, and a fashionable cap sitting on Tato's patio, fiddling with his cell phone and complaining about a lack of reception. The young man explained that he lived in Havana, but had made a journey to the farm for in-depth work to complement a consultation he had received during Tato's last visit to the capital. Vodú has spread from rural enclaves to urban centers. Both Tato and Pablo regularly travel to Havana where they are eagerly awaited by clients and spiritual godchildren and lavishly hosted.

Pablo has become a something of a spokesperson for the Haitian community in Cuba. He is invited to festivals and events as a keynote presence,

and has visited Haiti three times as the guest of cultural NGOs. He also directs a folkloric troupe that parades every year in the Festival del Caribe, and often supervises a public ritual during the festival. Although government officials were not always supportive, the Casa del Caribe pushed boundaries soon after its founding by staging not only orderly re-enactments of rituals presented as dance shows, but presenting actual rituals as a part of its festival programming. This continues today. The Casa del Caribe's budget provides funds for rum, sacrificial animals, and other ritual necessities during festivals. Practitioners appreciate institutional support in buying sacrificial animals and other items for the spirits. I have spoken with many practitioners who collectively exclaim that they feel that rituals staged for the public are as "authentic" as any they might do at home. Those attending the public rituals, whether general festival-goers, or television crews or anthropologists, confirm the status of Haitian spiritual culture within Cuban national identity.

Use of the word Vodú is relatively recent in place of "serving the spirits" or "serving the mysteries." Practitioners tend to describe events as "parties for the saints" (*fiestas del santo*) rather than "ceremonies" or "rituals." Some are held to coincide with saint's days, others whenever a family can raise the resources or receives help from an institute or organization. The spirits are the guests of honor who will attend in the form of trance possession. They are invited and coaxed with singing, music, dance, and attractive tables or altars set with food and drink.

In April 2010 I attended a three-day celebration for the Vodú spirits at the home of Pablo Milanés in Pilon del Cauto in the Sierra Maestra mountains in Santiago province. The penetration of institutions into many *haitiano-cubano* communities runs deep. Amateur folkloric performance troupes have become ubiquitous, and almost all are tied to culture bureaucracies that provide budgets for costumes and transportation, however modest. Joined by bonds of friendship and collegiality, the director of the Casa del Caribe, Orlando Vérges, attended Pablo Milanés' spirit fete, bringing along cases of rum, and a truckload of other party guests, including Santiago's most famous sculptor, Alberto Lescay, and a young group of practicing Paleros from the city. Institutional sponsorship of rituals in Cuba is not unlike current practices I observed in Haiti, whereby Haitians living in the first-world diaspora fund Vodou events in their home village, or intellectuals, artists, politicians, or rock bands patronize large Vodou temples. Many Vodú families in Cuba have ties to institutions, and their ritual specialists regularly preside over public rituals at festivals.

The term that believers use for these events – calling them "parties" for the spirits – sheds light on perceptions of authenticity. A fete may be enhanced by institutional donations of food and drink, VIP guests, and media coverage. Vodú practice in Cuba also includes the work spiritual consultants do in healing clients, private magics, initiations, or small family events, and

they do guard their professional secrets, but as the above enhancement suggests, notions of “pure” ceremonies hosted for and by “insider” groups can be illusory.

VODÚ IN CUBA

What is the relationship of Cuban Vodú to Haitian Vodou? It can be tempting to classify the Cuban version as an “antique” practice, an older version of Haitian Vodou, preserved by lack of contact with its homeland. Cuban Vodú does reflect characteristics of the *braceros*. Haiti of the early twentieth century was more regional (and many *braceros* were from southern Haiti) and less centralized before deforestation, land seizures by elites and by U.S. companies, and military occupation displaced peasants to the cities and abroad. Rural Vodou practice was largely familial, with the patriarch or matriarch as ritual specialist tending inherited spirits called *loa*.³⁴ Today, urbanization is a standardizing factor, and many temples in the capital maintain a branch in the lead ritual specialist’s home village.³⁵ It is more hierarchical, with more elaborate initiations. While Vodú in Cuba has many common points with the family-centered practices of rural Haiti of decades past, it is not a museum of 1920s Vodou, but has adapted and changed in its new environment.³⁶

What is the relationship of Vodú to other spiritual practices in Cuba? Santería, the most emblematic Afro-Cuban spiritual practice and more formally called Regla de Ocha, is linked to beliefs brought to Cuba by slaves from the Yoruba ethnic region of Nigeria.³⁷ It has become a ubiquitous symbol of Cuba’s African heritage, and the religion’s brightly costumed dancing deities adorn labels of rum bottles, postcards, and hotel restaurant menus. However, Santería emerged in western Cuba, specifically Havana and Matanzas, only spreading to *oriente* in the early twentieth century (Wirtz 2007). Now common in urban areas, its pantheon of charismatic deities and colorful symbols have penetrated other spiritual practices, as for example when believers use Santería vocabulary, explaining that the Vodú *loa* Ecili Freda is “like Ochun” or the deity Lucero “is the Congo version of Elegguá.” The various branches of Regla de Palo or Regla Congo have also fluidly entered *oriente* from the

34. In current Haitian Creole orthography *lwa* is the common spelling convention. Spelling variants also occur for the names of deities, for example “Erzulie” or “Ezili” is typically rendered as “Ecili” in Cuba.

35. My thanks to ethnographer Katherine Smith for this observation.

36. For more on Cuban Vodú vis-à-vis Haitian belief systems, see Alexis Alarcón’s “¿Vodú en Cuba o Vodú cubano?” (1988).

37. For discussion of the history of Santería, see for example Bolívar Aróstegui 1990, Palmié 2002, and Brown 2003.

west, although initiation remains much less expensive than in Santería, and many practitioners use it in conjunction with other systems.

Traditionally, eastern Cuba has been a stronghold of Spiritism (*espiritismo*) and folk Catholic devotions such as celebrating saint's days, making pilgrimages, and fulfilling *promesas* ("promises" or resolutions) to secure holy intercession. "Muerterismo" is becoming a more common term to describe spiritist ancestor veneration (see Millet 1999). And, there is *bembé de sao*. In Cuban vernacular a *bembé* refers to a party for the spirits, and *sao* means "bush," connoting backwoods, so a *bembé de sao* is roughly translatable as "bembé of the bush" or a rural spirit ritual, usually mixing practices from various belief systems, mirroring the background of local practitioners, from *espiritistas* to *vodouistas*.

Whether and how Vodú in Cuba has incorporated influences from other Cuban practices depends on the community and practitioner. Spiritism is visible in the many "stair-step" style altars (as opposed to flat on a table or on the ground) constructed by Vodú practitioners in Holguín province, a stronghold of *espiritismo*. The Haitian language terms *manbo* and *oungan* for ritual specialists are sometimes replaced by the *santero* and *santera* more familiar to Cuban clients. In both Barrancas and Santiago city I met specialists who treated clients with a mixture of Vodú practices taught to them by their Haitian fathers and Spiritist philosophies cherished by their Cuban mothers. Many *haitiano-cubanos* hold their biggest spiritual festivities during the month of December, rather than on the saints' days traditional in Haiti, reflecting the importance in Cuba of celebrating Santa Barbara on the 4th and San Lazaro on the 17th. Some *loa*, like Gran Buá (Gran Bwa in Haiti), are relatively unimportant in Haiti, while in Cuba the opposite is true.³⁸ Gran Buá is regularly feted at celebrations across the eastern provinces of Cuba and is an important inherited deity in a number of Vodú families.

Today, a few *haitiano-cubanos* are able to travel to Haiti. As mentioned earlier, the Milanés brothers, likely Cuba's most famous *oungans*, have visited Haiti as guests of cultural organizations. The Creole Choir of Cuba has made several trips to Haiti, most recently to perform in displaced-persons camps following the 2010 earthquake.³⁹ Some Cubans of Haitian heritage have asked Cuban doctors completing missions in Haiti to search for family members or befriended Haitian medical students on scholarship in Cuba. It is possible for Cubans who can prove a Haitian parent or grandparent to get a tourist visa from the Haitian Embassy in Havana, forgoing a more com-

38. During informal conversations between 2008 and 2011, Pablo Milanés confirmed my observations, remarking that during his visits to Haiti he was surprised by the lack of attention dedicated to Gran Buá.

39. Conversation with members of the choir on October 1, 2011. The choir, known as Grupo Vocal Desandann in Cuba, sings a repertoire in Haitian language.

plex process necessitating letters of invitation. I know of two members of folkloric groups who successfully secured visas and managed to raise the funds for one of the twice-weekly flights to Port au Prince from Santiago. Both bought items like jeans and watches in Haiti's markets and sold them for a profit on the black market in Cuba, allowing them to recoup travel costs and plan the next trip. One lamented that he had not be able to attend any Vodou events while in Haiti or find his Haitian family members. He stayed in the home of Cuban doctors running a clinic, and spent all his time shopping.

NEW FESTIVALS DEDICATED TO *HAITIANO-CUBANO* CULTURE

The penetration of the folkloric imaginary into Haitian heritage communities in Cuba is deep. Festivals serve as points where *haitiano-cubanos* perform their culture for the general public and as opportunities for people spread across the island to network, dance together, and engage in all-night jam sessions.

The Eva Gaspar Festival in Ciego de Avila province was established in 1999 to commemorate the legacy of Eva Gaspar, who immigrated to Cuba from Haiti in 1918, becoming a tireless promoter of her native culture in her new country. It takes place in a town dominated by a sugarmill and its large smokestack. A rail line transports cane. The small station house still proclaims "Violeta" although the municipality was re-named "Primero de Enero" after the socialist revolution.⁴⁰ With its enormous sugar-processing plant, the town has been a destination for cane cutters and processors for decades. In the early twentieth century, many of the laborers were Haitians and their descendants still live locally.

Every year the festival includes a country fair with children's rides and snack vendors. It also features performances, an academic symposium, exhibits of traditional Haitian handicrafts and culinary arts, and "burning the devil" or *quema del diablo* in the town square after the closing parade. Festival director Ana Delia Marcial Reyez, herself of Haitian descent, works for the municipal culture office. She focuses on inviting companies who perform a repertoire of Haitian-heritage dance and music, both *portadores* and troupes that combine genres to form "fusion" styles or "restorations" (*restauraciones*). Some of these groups, including Ana Delia's own troupe, Nagó, include Cubans of various ethnic and racial backgrounds as well as Haitian descendants. The Festival Eva Gaspar has become Violeta's biggest public event, and receives support from the Haitian Embassy in Havana, the University of Ciego de Avila, UNESCO, the Haitian Association of Cuba,

40. "Primero de Enero" or "First of January" referes to the date of the revolution in 1959. Subsequently, many towns, streets, parks, and factories in Cuba were re-named.

and the Havana-based organization Bannzil Kiba Kreyol. Producers and programmers from the Casa del Caribe attend the Eva Gaspar Festival to scout talent for the next Festival del Caribe.



Dance troupe Bonita Patua performing during the 2010 Eva Gaspar festival.

Like the Festival del Caribe, the Festival Eva Gaspar includes a public ritual, hosted each year by a different ritual specialist. In 2010, the ritual was dedicated to the Vodú spirit Togo,⁴¹ a divinity represented by a powerful bull, and presided over by Tomas Poll Jr. from the town of Morón. Poll is an *oungan* and also the director of the folkloric group Renacer Haitiano. The ritual was originally scheduled for the town park, but after some discussion, organizers decided the event – with its potentially unruly possession trances and feeding the spirits with animal blood – should be moved to the home of Venancio, an elder of Haitian descent who lived nearby. Everyone present lit a candle and placed it on the ground around a simple altar featuring water, rum, coffee, an egg, sweets, and other foods. In Cuba it is costly (and requires permission from local authorities) to kill a bull, as would be traditional for Towo in Haiti. During the ritual, Poll, mounted by Togo, crouched astride a *verrac* (boar) before sacrificing it, a Cuban adaptation of the offering. At the close of the Festival Eva Gaspar, a professor from the local university urged that state promoters of tourism arrange transportation from the provincial capital and resort hotels, arguing that the Haitian-Cuban festival was an underexploited resource.



Vodú priest Tomas Poll mounted by the spirit Togo.

The sign welcoming visitors to the town of San Germán in Holguín province is shaped like its famous *central*, Urbano Noris, a sugar-processing factory with signature smokestacks. I arrived on August 14, 2008, to attend the

41. Spelled “Towo” in Haitian Creole orthography.

first annual Festival Bwa Kayiman.⁴² For years, event organizer Bertha Julia Noris – a provincial culture functionary of Haitian descent – wanted to commemorate the town’s Haitian mill laborers.⁴³ However, authorities preferred to promote the town’s Spanish legacy as more congruent with their image of the province. Nevertheless, Noris persisted, and in 2008 San Germán hosted its first Haitian heritage festival. The celebration featured museum displays, a culinary competition, folkdance in the town auditorium, and a public Vodú ritual held at the home of a local practitioner. Although the ceremony did not get started until 12:30 am, representatives from the municipal culture office attended, followed by a news cameraman unsuccessfully trying to rig up a klieg light to record the event.

Both the Eva Gaspar Festival and the newer Bwa Kayiman Festival attract the attention of academics, journalists, and tourism promoters and contribute to a re-visioning of Haitian heritage as a feature of the *oriente* region as a whole. Participation by Cubans who are not of Haitian descent has become ubiquitous. Cubans of varied backgrounds attended both Festival Eva Gaspar and Bwa Kayiman. Renacer Haitiano includes members who are not of Haitian descent, as does the artist’s collective Taller Ennegro. While Cubans have long visited Haitian herbalists and ritual specialists for cures and consultations, Vodú has become part of the repertoire of at least one well-known Havana-based *santera*, as we shall see in the next section. Just as Santería is no longer associated with *lucumí* (Yoruba) parentage, Vodú has spread outside *haitiano-cubano* enclaves, perhaps growing into a regional as much as ethnic symbol.

VODÚ CHIC

Expertise in Vodú is becoming a sought-after spiritual skill in Cuba’s capital city. For example, influential *santera* Nancy Pulles Méndez, the proprietor of “el Templo de Oyá,” a large Santería sanctuary and religious art emporium in Havana, has been studying Vodú, with help from members of Grupo Misterios del Vodú, a folkloric dance troupe currently led by Silvia Gardes. The group, originally based in Santiago, moved to Havana in pursuit of new opportunities. Gardes and Pulles co-sponsored a public ritual for the *loa* Oggún Ferraire in Gardes’s home in Havana in March 2009. Pulles explains that she finds Vodú inspiring and is always seeking to expand her knowledge of African-rooted spirituality.⁴⁴ She has even enrolled in Haitian language

42. Bwa Kayiman (alligator forest) refers to a legendary ritual held August 14, 1791 in the north of Haiti by slaves plotting against the colonial French regime. The ensuing rebellion launched the Haitian Revolution.

43. Noris wrote a Masters thesis about Haitian laborers in Urbano Noris in the early twentieth century.

44. Personal conversation, March 19, 2009.

classes. The Temple of Oya is becoming a channel for disseminating Vodú in Cuba's capital.

Vodú priest Tato's son Emilio Milanés Zamora is a member of "El Taller Experimental Ennegro," an artists' collective in Palma Soriano, a town in Santiago province. The group includes sculptors, actors, musicians, dancers, and ritual specialists. Ennegro artists take their inspiration from Vodú.⁴⁵ Creating art installations inspired by Vodú imagery is a specialty. A *vevé* is a Vodú symbol drawn on the ground for ritual occasions, traditionally using cornmeal or flour. As the ritual proceeds, the participants' dancing feet erase the designs. For the Festival del Caribe 2010, Taller Ennegro created a mandala-like *vevé* from multicolored sand depicting linked Cuban and Haitian flags and sacred symbols on the patio of the Teatro Heredia in Santiago. Sculptures and a temporary *ounfort* or *cai misté* (Vodú temple) completed the installation, with Taller Ennegro member *oungan* Jhosvany Milanés Carbonell offering blessings and greeting visitors (often while mounted by a spirit).



Vevé made from colored sand by artists' collective Taller Ennegro for the 2010 Festival del Caribe featuring linked Haitian and Cuban flags.

45. From conversations with Emilio Milanés Zamora March 19, 2010 in Palma Soriano and May 4, 2010 in Santiago de Cuba.

Taller Ennegro have a bigger project underway, the “Proyecto de Eco-Arte y Economía Sostenible: Vevé de Afá” an artists’ colony and ecological shrine. To be situated on fallow land at a confluence of two rivers, the project proposal envisions community gardens, studios, ritual space, and a massive *vevé* fashioned from vegetation planted in designs that can be recognized from above. This eco-art project has been listed in the U.N. Habitat Best Practices Database.⁴⁶ The efforts of El Taller Experimental Ennegro exemplify new international relationships for avant-garde visions of practitioners of Cuban Vodú.

CONCLUSION

Haitian laborers and their descendants were once viewed in Cuba as dispossessed and disadvantaged migrant workers holding firm to old-fashioned traditions carried from their homeland, with conditions of privation and segregation facilitating the preservation of time-honored customs. While preservation of lifeways and customs has been attributed to isolation and poverty, the academy, political actors, commerce, and tourism can influence the maintenance of traditions. In the decades after the Cuban Revolution, the socialist government opened a vehicle for the re-imagining of spiritual traditions through public performance in the burgeoning arena of folklore. Professional performers such as Toni Pérez and research institutions such as the Casa del Caribe invited members of Haitian communities to share their music, dance, and traditions, and to form folklore troupes. As the Special Period opened venues for contact with the world outside Cuba, culture ministries, academic institutions, festival producers, and conference programmers became active culture brokers, distributing resources such as access to audiences and travel opportunities.

Haitiano-cubanos became increasingly active agents in the dissemination of their culture to a larger public. Haitian culture in Cuba is braided into the economy of folklore. Festivals and performance have become important motivators in the preservation and renovation of Haitian spiritual practices, music, dance, and language. The creation of folkloric dance and music groups motivates new generations to learn customs associated with their Haitian identity. People of Haitian descent in Cuba have found innovative ways to work against the discrimination and marginalization they face. In a country where national identity balances between socialist values and endorsing the country’s rich legacy of African-inspired performance arts and spiritual systems, Vodú has begun to take its place as a recognized element in Cuba’s national identity and perhaps even in some circles, as the latest frontier of the eco-artistic avant-garde.

46. For more on the project, see <http://openarchitecturenetwork.org/projects/2032>.

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ULBE BOSMA & JONATHAN CURRY-MACHADO

TWO ISLANDS, ONE COMMODITY:
CUBA, JAVA, AND THE GLOBAL SUGAR TRADE (1790-1930)

Sugar had, by the eighteenth century, become a global commodity. It originated in East Asia and plantations in the Americas fed the growing taste for its use in Europe as its consumption became increasingly popular (Mintz 1985). The 1791 Revolution in Saint Domingue (Haiti) and the 1807 British abolition of the slave trade prompted shifts in the epicentres of sugar, the most important of these arguably being to Cuba and Java. These two fertile islands saw the burgeoning development of sugar-plantation systems with major inputs of foreign capital and forced labor: Cuba with slavery in place until 1886 and Java with its Cultivation System (1830-1870) which forced the population to spend part of their time and land growing cash crops for the colonial government. In the process the two islands each, respectively, became central to the very much truncated Spanish and Dutch colonial empires left after the Napoleonic wars and the Latin American wars of liberation; and by the mid-nineteenth century for Cuba, and by the late nineteenth century for Java, they had been catapulted to global sugar pre-eminence.

The positioning of the two islands in the global commodity market was not new. Both Cuba and Java were located in regions that had been absorbed into the global economy from the earliest days of modern European history: following the landing of Columbus in Cuba in 1492, and the Portuguese conquest of Malacca, on the Malay Peninsula, in 1512. It was in the nineteenth century, however, that the economies of Cuba and Java became overwhelmingly integrated into, and dependent on, the world market with its booms and depressions, and increasingly reliant on sugar exports at the expense of other important crops, such as tobacco and coffee.

Both Java and Cuba are relatively large islands, with soils and climate well suited for growing a number of export commodity crops. Three in particular figured prominently in the history of both islands: coffee, tobacco, and sugar cane (Table 1). However, the export-crop economy of both Cuba and Java became, through the nineteenth century, increasingly dominated by sugar. Though most of Java is tropical, its sugar belt was located in the

Eastern Salient, which was in many respects similar to subtropical Cuba with a dry and a wet season and fertile soil.

Table 1. Production of Coffee, Tobacco and Sugar in Java and Cuba, 1750-1900 (metric tons)

	Coffee		Tobacco		Sugar	
	Java*	Cuba†	Java**	Cuba††	Java***	Cuba†††
1750	963	0	0	1,141	3,680	4,969
1800	7,316	625	0	2,396	3,700	28,761
1850	69,144	6,220	574	3,619	102,000	294,952
1900	42,752	2,105	30,200	17,858	744,000	309,195

* 1800, estimated early 1800s average (Bulbeck *et al.* 1998).

† export figures, five-year averages. High point of 23,130 reached in 1830-34. 1900, using figures from 1890-94 (García 2008).

** 1800 & 1850 (Korthals-Altes 1991:158, Mansvelt 1939:33).

†† earliest production figures from 1761 (Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Real Consulado y Junta de Fomento, 209/9454, No. 10, with thanks to Charlotte Cosner) (Sarmiento Ramírez 2004:68, Stubbs 1989).

*** Data for 1750, average for 1750s; 1800, using data from 1797 (Bulbeck *et al.* 1998).

††† 1750 and 1800, export figures. Before 1895-98 war, 1,110,991 was reached (1894) (Moreno 1978:v.3).

Nevertheless, by the final decades of the century European beet sugar was causing a collapse in world sugar prices. While production in Java continued to grow steadily – thanks to the fact that it was able to access the growing Japanese, Indian, and Chinese markets – Cuba's industry suffered collapse, accentuated by the impact of the island's three wars of independence (1868-78, 1879-80, and 1895-98). Nevertheless, the early years of the twentieth century again brought rapid growth, such that by 1920 only 8 percent of the value of Cuba's exports came from anything else (Santamaría 2001:399). With their highly vertically integrated industries, the two islands were the two largest cane-sugar exporters in the world, between them supplying more than half of the available cane sugar on the world market by 1870 – a pre-eminence that was maintained until the 1930s, when the sugar industry of both went into decline (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Sugar-cane production (million tons), Cuba and Java, and share of world sugar cane¹

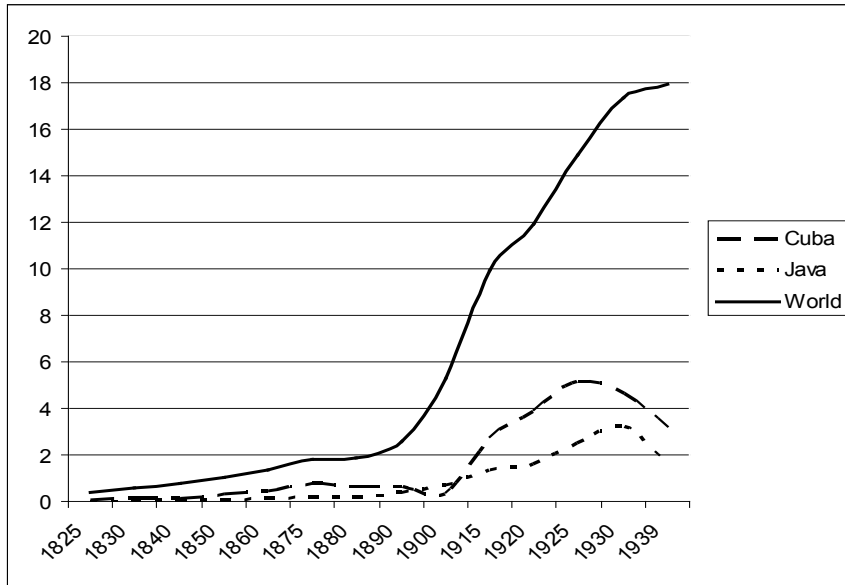
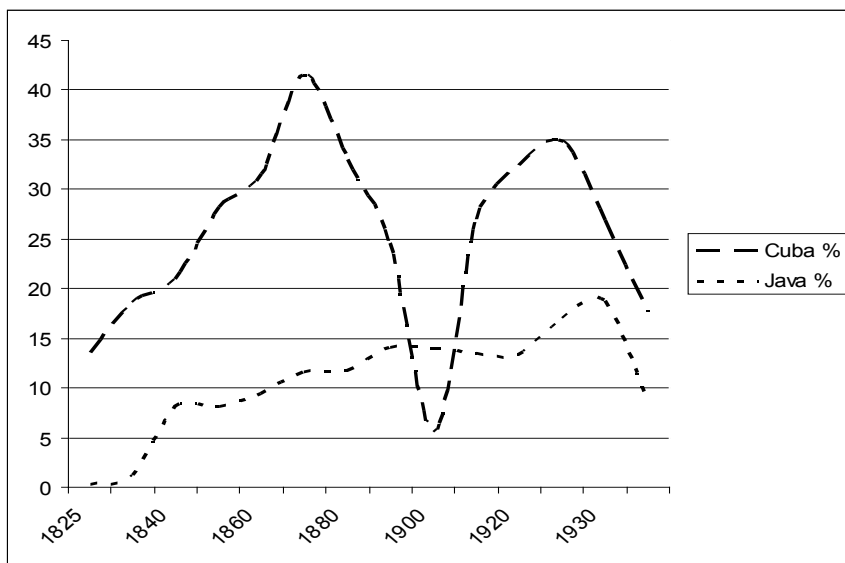


Figure 2. Cuba and Java share of world sugar cane²



1. Sources: Galloway 1989:212, Moreno Fraginals 1978, Santamaría 2001.

2. Sources: Galloway 1989:212, Moreno Fraginals 1978, Santamaría 2001.

There has been an abundance of studies on Cuba and Java each in their own right, but none systematically examines their parallel trajectories. Situated as they are in opposite hemispheres, Cuba has always been studied in the context of Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Java in that of Asian Studies. As a result, they have been analyzed as part of two entirely different worlds; and two distinct imperial blocks (the Spanish and Dutch). Yet the question arises as to how sugar came to dominate the agriculture, industry, and trade of these two islands; and how these two islands in particular, in two different colonial systems and parts of the world, should rise to sugar pre-eminence in the way they did and when they did. Are there connections and similarities between the two that help explain this phenomenon?

The article seeks to analyze the conditions that led Java and Cuba to become the prime cane-sugar exporters of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It starts by suggesting that in both Cuba and Java, the initiative for developing the sugar industry originated in the close link that connected their dominant elites not just to their respective imperial networks, but importantly to transnational, transimperial trade and capital. Of particular importance was the way in which this stimulated technological and scientific innovation in both, catapulting the sugar industry of the two islands to global prominence. This was enabled not only through the introduction of the latest advances in machinery and method, but also the immigration of skilled technical workers from Europe and North America. New sugar frontiers were opened on both islands that offered room for expansion at a time of rapidly growing demand for sugar in Europe, which could not be met by the smaller, long-established plantation islands that suffered from environmental degradation and an absence of available space. But for this to occur, radical changes needed to be made to the system of land ownership and use. At the same time, on both fertile islands the sugar industries each had their own way of finding a solution for mobilizing and ensuring sufficient labor without jeopardizing the colonial order. This question eventually came to dominate the political system through which social control could be ensured, particularly because Cuba and Java came to be ever more closely tied to global capital and trade; and both islands became dominated by sugar while at the same time coming to dominate global sugar production.

LOCAL PLANTOCRACY, TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS, AND THE RISE OF CUBAN AND JAVANESE SUGAR

Since the sixteenth century, commodity crops played a key role in the European colonization of Asia and the Americas. European demand for sugar increasingly outstripped the limited cultivation of cane in the Mediterranean and Atlantic islands, and so was introduced early on as a colonial plantation

crop. Cuba had significant strategic importance for the Spanish empire due to its geographical location, with Havana in particular operating as a key Atlantic port city, first for Spain's bullion armadas, and by the eighteenth century for tobacco trade. Although sugar cane was cultivated on the island in only small, relatively insignificant quantities, it began to play an important role in the local economy.

Java likewise acquired an early strategic value for the Dutch empire, ever since Batavia, present-day Jakarta, was founded in 1619 to act as the hub for Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) operations. After the VOC had lost Taiwan with its sugar plantations to the Chinese in 1662 and its attempts to turn Mauritius into a flourishing sugar island had failed, it concentrated its sugar production on Java where it imposed a monopoly on this crop. The center of gravity was around Batavia where VOC officials owned private lands, which they rented out to Chinese millers, who produced under a VOC monopoly. In the course of the eighteenth century sugar production was spreading along the north coast of Java. Sugar was an important commodity for the VOC's intra-Asian trade, mostly taken as ballast since it was only under exceptional circumstances profitable as a primary commodity. In the second half of the eighteenth century most of the VOC sugar was sold in Surat (India), and somewhat less was sold in Malabar (India) and Japan (Reesse 1908:89, 168, 182-83). Java was a sugar exporter of some consequence but its prospects for further expansion were bleak. By the end of the eighteenth century sugar production around Batavia had reached its ecological limits. The soil was exhausted, forests providing wood for fuel had disappeared, and there was a shortage of buffalo to grind and transport cane (Teisseire 1785). After the French Revolution and the revolution in Saint Domingue sugar prices rose and the colonial authorities in Batavia considered various plans to reinvigorate sugar production on Java (Leidemeijer 1997). Around 1800 there were various investigations into how the sugar production around Batavia could be revived through the application of West Indies furnaces and mills. Private planters were encouraged by the VOC to solve the problem of a lack of fuel by importing the sugar-boiling equipment that was in use at that time in Mauritius and the West Indies. Moreover, British and French planters came to Java shortly after 1800 to introduce West Indies equipment, and a steam-driven mill was brought to Java by a British-Danish house accompanied by eight British technicians (Bosma 2005:24).

Sugar cane originated in Asia, and did not reach the Americas until Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century, with the first sample brought from the Canary Islands by Christopher Columbus to the island of Hispaniola in 1493 (Deerr 1949:v.1). Despite being well suited to the Caribbean climate, the cultivation of sugar cane spread slowly in Cuba. However, although it remained small-scale, it began to develop as an important local economic activity, in particular around Havana, Bayamo, and Santiago de Cuba, stimu-

lating the influx of African slaves (Aimes 1907, Le Riverend 1974:72). By the mid-seventeenth century, small plantations were being established throughout the island wherever there was some human settlement – though sugar manufacturing remained rather primitive and overshadowed by the region's leading sugar-producing colonies (Barbados, Jamaica, Guadeloupe, and above all Saint Domingue). By 1778, Cuba continued to export less than ten thousand tons a year, compared to the 163,403 tons exported by the neighboring French colony of Saint Domingue.³

The early Cuban sugar industry, although small in scale and producing largely for local consumption, also supplemented the supply in Spain (where the demand was increasingly hard to meet through the ailing Mediterranean sugar industry) and found an outlet in the regional contraband trade. As a result it contributed to the gradual accumulation of wealth by Cuban landowners. As the eighteenth century proceeded, sugar became a more dynamic alternative to the hitherto dominant cattle-ranching activities of much of this creole elite. Although slowed in their ambitions by the strict restrictions on the clearing of forestland, this sugar-related plantocracy had, by the late eighteenth century, become highly influential and self-confident (Funes 2008, García Rodríguez 2007). As a result they were well placed to capitalize quickly upon the revolution in Saint Domingue in 1791, which removed from the world market what was the epoch's leading sugar producer, thereby providing an opportunity for expansion elsewhere. Cuba, with its extensive tracts of unexploited land, offered considerable scope to absorb much of this demand, at a time when many of the smaller Caribbean islands – which had dominated sugar production since the seventeenth century – were already experiencing soil exhaustion due to earlier over-cultivation of cane (Galloway 1989).

It was primarily through the initiative of these creole planters that this expansion took place – though the wealth-generation possibilities also brought the arrival of new settlers. Most of these came from Spain itself, encouraged by the increasingly evident prospects offered by the island's growing export agriculture – be it coffee, tobacco, or sugar; and this further enabled Cuban planters to exploit their familial, cultural, and political ties to the imperial metropole. This they did very effectively. While elsewhere in Hispanic America local elites (themselves also mainly descendants of Spanish settlers) were organizing to seize independence for their newly forming nations, in Cuba an effective compromise was brokered between the imperial state (keen not to lose this strategically and fiscally important colony) and the local oligarchy (keen to exploit the economic benefits that they were reaping). It was this that contributed to the persistence of slavery on the island until the 1880s – if not with official blessing in the face of

3. Benitez 1977:136-38, Black 2002:60, Ely 2001:47-86, Le Riverend 1974:72, 161, Moreno Fragnals 1978:34-35, Watts 1987:301.

attempts by the British to enforce the anti-slave trade treaty signed by Spain in 1817, then by concertedly turning a blind eye – with the sugar industry in particular dependent upon captive labor.

But migrant planters and merchants from throughout the North Atlantic area also arrived, tying Cuba to transnational, transimperial commercial networks (Ely 2001). Following the Haitian Revolution many of the French colonists displaced from that neighboring island established themselves in Cuba, bringing with them their expertise in the sugar and coffee industries, commercial connections, and capital (Portuondo 1996). When Britain was in the process of abolishing slavery in the 1830s, British West Indian planters came to the island accompanied by the slaves they would otherwise have been forced to set free (Curry-Machado 2004). From Europe and North America, merchants brought with them innovative trading methods and links with banking capital, which along with the advanced technology that began to be imported, led to a modernization of the Cuban economy despite its continuing dependence upon slavery (Curry-Machado 2009). However, while this could be seen as the start of a process that would gradually lead to the replacement of Spanish colonial overlords with a more economy-driven form of foreign domination, the initial period of expanding sugar production may be seen more as a collaboration between these new actors, and the local planting elite whose ranks many of them joined.

From the 1790s, institutions dedicated to the promotion of the island's agriculture, industry, and progress (such as the *Sociedad Económica de la Habana*) were founded, with official sponsorship but led by prominent representatives of the colonial plantocracy. While turning their attention to a wide range of modernizing activities, there was from the start a clear bias in favor of sugar interests. This continued to intensify through the early nineteenth century, as abolition of the slave trade by the British in 1807 followed by emancipation in Britain's sugar-producing colonies in the 1830s gave Cuba – where slave labor continued to increase – an additional market advantage facilitating development of its sugar industry (although the social and political contradictions that this fostered would increasingly take their toll).

The Cuban plantocracy's links to Spain continued to be an important factor in favoring the growth of the island's sugar industry, by gradually allowing liberalization of Cuba's economic relations and ensuring a level of social and political control that slowed and weakened the development of independence and Afro-Cuban struggles. However, the Spanish state contributed little to actual infrastructural, agricultural, and industrial development. Instead, the Cuban plantocracy were obliged to seek sources of capital investment elsewhere; and they were particularly proactive and successful in doing this. Partly through their own contacts established through foreign travel and European-based kinship and business networks, but also through the presence of a number of key diasporic merchants of non-Spanish origin, they were able

to develop their industry and trade through transnational financial and commercial networks. This relative freedom from imperial bounds did much to enable the rapid growth of the island's sugar industry (Curry-Machado 2011).

The Dutch likewise found there to be a considerable incentive to increase the amount of land planted with cane. In the first decades of the nineteenth century attempts were made to revive the Chinese-dominated sugar plantations in West Java. In addition British merchant houses that had bought large estates on Java imported West Indies equipment. However, this combination of mainly Chinese and British sugar business did not produce the desired increase in sugar output, which was an important reason for Governor-General Johannes van den Bosch (1830-1834) to introduce his Cultivation System (1830-1870) (Knight 1980). Though under the Cultivation System the colonial government took care of the supplies of cane to the manufacturers who were obliged to sell their sugar to the semi-governmental Netherlands Trading Society, the input of private entrepreneurs, the majority of whom were either Chinese, British, French, or German, was essential (Bosma 2007). This was reinforced by the presence and key involvement of migrants from elsewhere in Europe and North America backed up by British and North American investors and local Chinese capital.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC INNOVATION

Both Spain and the Netherlands were late industrializers, significantly behind in the spread of steam-based technology in the early nineteenth century. As a result, neither was capable of equipping the emerging sugar industries with the necessary technology, leading both Cuba and Java to become heavily reliant on British, French, and (in the case of the former) North American engineering. This was facilitated by the same transnational networks that were channeling investment in, and trade out.

In Cuba, prominent creoles with fortunes largely accumulated from sugar went out of their way to facilitate the introduction of the latest advances in steam technology and sugar-milling machinery from the foundries of the United States, Britain, and France. These sugar planters became students of milling and refining technology, eagerly learning from all these developments and exploring how to apply them to their own industry, traveling extensively to ensure that they remained on the cutting edge. As a result of their initiatives, during the mid-nineteenth century the application of steam in Cuba's sugar mills became generalized (Bergad 1990:90, Martínez-Fernández 1994:98), with 70 percent using steam engines by 1860 from just 20 percent in 1846 (Marrero 1973-86:159). The advances that were introduced in all aspects of sugar production enabled the improvement in quality for which Cuban sugar became renowned (Curry-Machado 2011, Dye 1998, Moreno 1978); and

increased sugar production led to, and was itself the result of, the development of an extensive rail network (Zanetti & García 1987), as well as steamship routes. Rather than being initiated by the unequal exchange of imperial imposition, it emerged from “the equal interchange between Cuban planters and foreign machine manufacturers, in a process that sidelined Spanish imperial control over the island” (Curry-Machado 2009:40). However, as the nineteenth century progressed the balance gradually tipped in favor of the foreign manufacturers (as advances in machinery continued apace) and the bankers and merchants who facilitated the necessary capital investment, and thereby obtained increasing control of the island’s sugar industry and trade. By the twentieth century this had resulted in the island falling under the sway of North American interests in particular. Nevertheless, during the early to mid-nineteenth century the free engagement of the Cuban plantocracy with transnational trading networks and the cutting edge of industrial advances gave to Cuba’s sugar industry a commercial and technological dynamism that owed little if anything to the Spanish state.

The sugar industry in Java was also able to position itself within the global technological vanguard, and just as Cuba led the Western hemisphere in its introduction of steam technology to sugar mills, so too did Java within Asia by the mid-nineteenth century. Although railways were slower to develop (not until the 1870s), steam was quickly introduced to sugar manufacture. By 1860, most of Java’s sugar factories employed steam engines for at least part of their processes.

In both Java and Cuba, this technological advancement was made possible not only through the introduction of machinery, but also the presence of skilled migrants from the key industrial centers of Europe and North America. The number of mostly non-Dutch technicians and engineers for the sugar factories has been estimated at 36 for 1820-29, 78 for 1830-39, 115 for 1840-49, and 204 for 1850-59 (Bosma 2005:26). In Cuba, there were more than six hundred by the early 1850s, and in excess of eight hundred in the 1860s. Although this was a relatively small group, their strategic positioning at the heart of the industry that was driving both islands’ development, and their contribution to its technological advancement, gave them a significance that belied their numbers (Curry-Machado 2011:67). Though both the Spanish and Dutch metropolitan governments were anxious to preserve these colonies as loyal parts of their empires, they were flexible enough to allow foreign technological skills and capital to contribute to the emerging sugar industries; and such technicians, merchants, and planters made up an important share of the foreign residents of Cuba and Java (Bosma 2005:9-11, Curry-Machado 2011:69).

The mid-nineteenth century was a time of growing markets and secular declining prices, and Cuba and Java were able to increase their share in world exports, whereas other Caribbean and Asian producers lost their markets. Capital goes to places where it can be made most profitable and both in

Cuba and Java capital found abundant investment opportunities in railways and factory installations. Technological development in the Java and Cuba sugar industry was incremental and went by fits and starts, but the overall picture is one of rapidly increasing capital intensity of the sugar industry from the early decades of the nineteenth century onward.

Not only did the introduction of technological advances play an important part in the development of the Cuban and Javanese sugar industries. As the nineteenth century progressed, advances aimed at improving agriculture were made in scientific investigation. In 1862, the Cuban scientist Álvaro Reynoso published a key text that argued for the need to introduce scientific principles into the cultivation of sugar cane. His system recommended improved tilling, fertilization, and irrigation, along with annual planting at measured intervals (Reynoso 1862). His ideas were largely ignored in Cuba until several decades later, but his book was quickly translated into Dutch and proved highly influential in the development of Java's sugar industry. The need to maximize soil productivity due to the limit on the land available to expand into, led to the early introduction in Java of more scientific agricultural methods – in particular with regards to cane strains, irrigation, fertilization, and the treatment of crop pests. This was facilitated by the active role that the Dutch state (in contrast with the Spanish) played in the promotion of the Java industry, bringing official sponsorship of scientific research and its application. The role of the government was taken over by the Java sugar factories themselves, once they established and funded three Experimental Stations in the 1880s.

Rather more tentative attempts were made to place Cuban agriculture on a more scientific footing during the late nineteenth century. Organizations such as the *Círculo de Hacendados*, and the publication of scientific agricultural treatises, handbooks, and journals, sought to instil the principles of fertilization, irrigation, and rational use of land. These were further promoted by the establishment of scientific agronomic stations (Fernández 2005). However, the continuing availability of underutilized land restricted the adoption of many scientific advances, since it continued to be easier for most planters to simply exhaust their soil and move on, or in the early twentieth century for large tracts of land to be brought under the sway of sugar corporations who saw more urgency in maximizing immediate profits than in rationalizing the agricultural method. In the long term this has led to extensive soil exhaustion throughout the island, and the incursion and generalized spread of opportunistic invading plants.

CHANGING LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE

For the sugar industry to expand in both Cuba and Java, it was not only necessary to improve the speed and capacity of production, and the quality of cultivation. Sugar factories required cane to grind, and mechanisms had to be found

to enable an extension of plantations. This was complicated in both islands, though for different reasons; but in both, solutions were found and enacted that directly contributed to the growing dominance of this single commodity.

Land occupation in colonial Cuba was, until the nineteenth century, based upon the division of the land into circular *haciendas*, mainly devoted to livestock ranching, with considerable restrictions placed upon the clearing of forests and therefore crop cultivation. Although formally all land continued ultimately to remain the property of the Spanish crown, effective ownership over the *haciendas* was granted to prominent settlers. In some parts of the island (in particular in the proximity of Havana) the larger estates became gradually subdivided into a range of different kinds of smaller farms – in particular as inroads were made into the crown-protected forests: *vegas*, cultivating the tobacco that was the island's principal commodity crop in the eighteenth century; livestock-rearing *potreros*; and *sitos de labor*, along with smaller *estancias*, on which food crops were cultivated. There were also the *ingenios*, larger plots devoted primarily to sugar-cane cultivation and grinding. Over much of the island, though, shared inheritance over the generations, marriage alliances, and the sale of land rights resulted in many *haciendas* being communally controlled by several landowners, who were often in conflict; while the tendency for *haciendas* to effectively overlap resulted in considerable imprecision in the establishment of boundaries. This had a serious effect on the possibility of effectively cultivating the land, and in many parts of Cuba this only became possible following the gradual and piecemeal process of breaking up the old *haciendas*, and setting formal boundaries (Funes 2008, García Rodríguez 2007, Le Riverend 1974). While by the mid-nineteenth century, most of the land in the western part of the island had been freed in this way, the process took longer in the central region, and in the east much land was still not demarcated until the early twentieth century, which the North American-owned sugar trusts were able to exploit to their advantage in the establishment of control over extensive territorial expanses (Zanetti *et al.* 1977).

Far from eroding the creole elite's control over land, the earlier break-up of the old *haciendas* in fact consolidated it by enabling them to enclose the most fertile tracts, and provided them with the means to establish the burgeoning sugar plantations of the nineteenth century. In those areas where this was achieved in the early and mid-nineteenth century, it enabled them to establish their landowning rights prior to the influx of powerful foreign interests by the early twentieth century. At the same time, it weakened the position of poorer peasant farmers, who for generations had occupied land – either on *haciendas* or in the crown-owned *realengos* that existed in the gaps between these and along the riverbanks. The formalization of land ownership in the nineteenth century resulted in many of these peasant farmers' – lacking the means and influence to assert their ancestral claims – becoming displaced. In the eighteenth century this process had already resulted in the smallholding tobacco

farmers of Havana being pushed westwards toward Pinar del Río to make way for the ambitions of sugar planters jealous of the fertile, cleared lands occupied by tobacco *vegas*. As the sugar frontiers spread during the nineteenth century (east from Havana into Matanzas and beyond; west from Trinidad to Cienfuegos; within the central region, around Sagua la Grande, San Juan de los Remedios, and Sancti-Spiritus; and spilling over from Santiago de Cuba in the east into the district of Guantánamo), this process increased. Although during the initial expansion smallholdings producing food or other commodities burgeoned alongside the sugar plantations that were driving the rearrangement of land control and enabling the clearing of forests, from the 1880s the establishment of sugar centrals resulted in most farmland in sugar-producing regions succumbing to cane (Curry-Machado 2010).

In Java, the sugar factories' room for expansion was created via another mechanism.⁴ The sugar industry was immersed in irrigated rice (*sawah*) agriculture, where cultivators were forced to grow sugar on assigned plots; while the limited availability of appropriate land made it necessary to develop from an early date the agricultural science that would maximize production from the irrigated land in which the industry had immersed itself. The central idea of what became known as the "Cultivation System" was that each household had to perform 66 days of compulsory work per year for a household to grow cash crops for the world market.⁵

From 1870 onward, the sugar factories were allowed to lease land directly from the Javanese peasantry, which reinforced the power of wealthy Javanese farmers over the poorer villagers. The expansion of the sugar factories was thus facilitated on the expansion of *sawah* agriculture, which in turn was a direct consequence of rapid demographic growth. Whereas the Cultivation System initially had relied on the indigenous nobility – allowing them to share in its profits – the sugar sector could increasingly count on the support of the wealthier rural strata, the village elites, to mobilize labor and land. These large farmers quite often acted as "absentees" using the advance payments of the sugar industry to rent it out to debt-ridden, petty, and marginal cultivators, becoming the major creditors in the village. In this respect the report of the Sugar Enquiry Committee (1921:172) spoke of the "*inlandsche capitalist*" (native capitalist) (Knight 1992:76).

4. In the Netherlands Indies Europeans, Chinese, and foreign Orientals were not allowed to own land, but with the enactment of the Agrarian Law of 1870 plantations could obtain large tracts of land under long-term lease (75 years). However, this was not of direct relevance to the sugar industry, which had inserted itself in *sawah* agriculture, with the tremendous advantage that through alternation with rice the exhaustion of sugar lands could be prevented.

5. Exempted from the Cultivation System were the semi-independent Principalities (the Regencies of Surakarta and Yogyakarta). Here extensive plantation agriculture was developed by creole planters who leased their lands from the *apanageholders* of courts.

Hence a consequence of the burgeoning plantation complexes in Cuba and Java was that in spite of their completely different points of departure in terms of land ownership, more and more land ended up in the hands or under the control of fewer people. In both islands, agrarian societies that they were, control over the land was a key to political power. With much of the best land claimed by those who drove the plantation economy, and with expansion of sugar production tying Java and Cuba ever more firmly into commodity dependency, this resulted in the marginalization of smaller farmers cultivating food crops, or else their absorption into the plantation complex.

This resulted in the development of the food-security problems that both countries continue to suffer from. However, conflicts between cash-crop and food production were of a different character in the two islands. In densely populated Java, food production by the peasantry was considered to be so essential that it was allowed to curb the expansion of the plantation economy in terms of its demand for land. Meanwhile, as the nineteenth century progressed Cuba was increasingly unable to meet its food needs even though the plantation economy increased the demand for foods and led to the large-scale cultivation of some staple food crops.

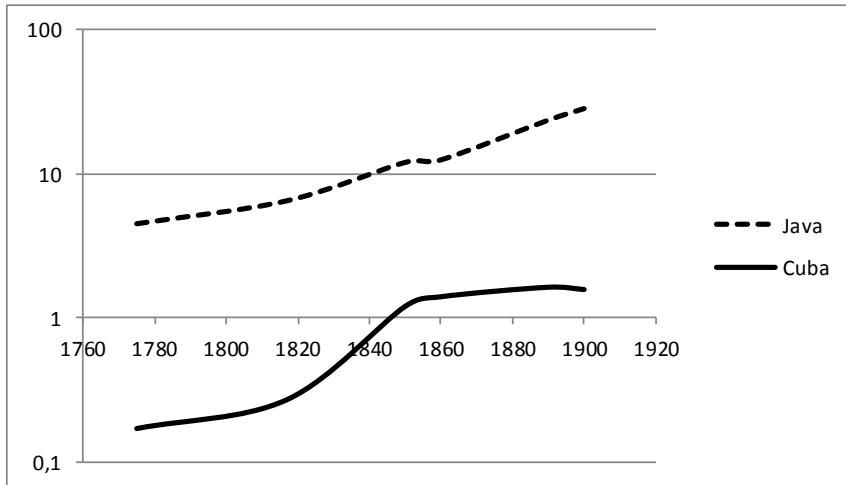
There was a tendency to abandon other crops in favor of the more lucrative sugar cane (Moreno 1978:v.1, 96); and by the early nineteenth century it was clear that the island was not self-sufficient in many staples. Food commodities were imported from early on: in particular beans (a central part of the Spanish diet) and rice (which became a Cuban staple during the nineteenth century). The general lack of subsistence crops was something remarked upon by Alexander von Humboldt (1856), following his visit to the island; and attempts at introducing some form of crop rotation, either by alternating harvests or interspersing cane with food crops such as corn, were opposed by leading planters, who believed that "it prejudices the increase and duration of the cane, since this first fruit and the grass that occupied the land in the period between the harvest of one crop and the sowing of the other wastes part of the earth's fertility" (O'Farrill 1793:122). The number of food-cultivating farms grew during the nineteenth century, yet they were incapable of fully meeting the food needs of the island's growing population, and the tendency for smallholdings to fall under the sway of the sugar plantation system increased in the aftermath of catastrophic hurricanes in the 1840s, absence of rural banking and credit facilities, and three devastating independence wars between 1868 to 1898, in which the rural poor were the worst hit, losing land, crops, and livelihood (Iglesias 2005:23). The expanding sugar estates were quick to capitalize upon this, to consolidate their hold over large tracts of land by the early twentieth century.

LABOR EXPLOITATION

If from the early decades of the nineteenth century Java and Cuba belonged to the technologically and agriculturally most advanced tropical cash-crop producers and were enabled in this through the willingness of their elites to change the rules governing land ownership and use, much of their industrial and commercial success was the result of a ruthless approach to labor mobilization and control. In an age of spreading liberalism, they both appeared to go against the tide in terms of labor relations: with *corvée* labor in Java, and slave and indentured labor in Cuba until the late-nineteenth century. The two islands both demonstrated that, far from being incommensurable with forced labor, advanced modes of production could flourish despite the apparent incongruity of the relations of production employed (Bergad 1989; Bosma & Knight 2004:9). Even as their reliance upon forced labor waned, and they moved to the use of wage labor, the “unfree” labor regime culture – of which highly effective use had been made by the sugar industry in particular, albeit with the concomitant social and political problems that it entailed – was maintained, and continued to contribute greatly both to sugar cane plantations increasingly dominating each island, and their produce dominating global trade.

Despite the apparent geographical similarities between Cuba and Java, demographically the two islands were very different. In the late eighteenth century Cuba was still very thinly populated, with the island’s total population standing at 170,000, whereas Java at that time counted 4.5 million inhabitants; and the population density of Java remained approximately ten times higher than that of Cuba throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (see Figure 3). This led to a crucial distinction between the two islands: in Cuba, a surplus of land enabled expanding cultivation, but a shortage of labor limited the capability to exploit this; while in Java, the opposite was true. Thus while in Cuba it was necessary to secure the immigration of laborers and tie these to the sugar plantations in sufficient numbers to fill the needs of the industry – with labor shortage being a continual problem – in Java, the problem was how to extract labor from the indigenous population.

As the British West Indian colonies began to move toward emancipation, in Cuba the growing sugar industry continued to generate a demand for labor, of which there was a chronic shortage in the island (Guerra 1970, Knight 1970, Moreno 1978). As a result of this, far from seeing a reduction in the slave trade following the signing of the Treaty for the Suppression of the Slave Trade by Spain and Britain in 1817, the period saw an extension of slave-trading practices. In the fifty years following the Treaty, 573,200 slaves arrived, either surviving the brutal transatlantic crossing or traded within the region – at times even kidnapped from islands where they had already been declared free (Curry-Machado 2004, Eltis 1987).

Figure 3. Population growth in Java and Cuba, 1780-1900 (log scale)⁶

Slavery pervaded every aspect of nineteenth-century Cuban society. However, it was above all in the sugar industry that slaves were concentrated, with almost half of the 368,000 slaves in the island in 1862 living on sugar plantations. As the century progressed sugar mills grew in capacity, and with that the number of laborers tied to the estate, which would often become self-contained communities on which physical control was an ever-present reality needed to keep order where almost four-fifths of the inhabitants were enslaved. By the mid-nineteenth century, it was becoming increasingly hard and expensive to fill labor demands with slaves, and an attempt was made to supplement them with indentured laborers, primarily from China though also native Americans, in particular from the Yucatecan peninsula in Mexico – living in conditions that, while limited to a fixed contractual period, verged on that of the slaves. But a combination of pressures, including the emancipation of many slaves during the first war of independence (1868-78), brought slavery to a phased-out end by 1886. At the same time, the process of centralization led to a much reduced number of functioning sugar mills, with many other estates devoting themselves entirely to the cultivation of cane to feed these increasingly massive central factories. Whereas before, each plantation had its own fixed body of laborers, with the introduction of “free” labor to the sugar industry most work became seasonal. In the late-nineteenth and into the twentieth century, during every sugar harvest armies of cane cutters – sometimes itinerant laborers moving from job to job, at others peasant farmers supplementing their income –

6. Sources: Boomgaard 1989:166, Ricklefs 1986:30 and *Report on the Census of Cuba 1899* by J.P. Sanger, Henry Gannet & Walter F. Willcox, 1900.

would be temporarily employed (with sugar factories and cane farms competing for their labor), alongside the smaller numbers with permanent positions in the mills or tending to the crops. As the Cuban sugar industry rapidly expanded in the early twentieth century, it again became particularly urgent for cheap labor to be acquired: and large numbers of seasonal laborers were recruited from elsewhere in the Caribbean, in particular neighboring Jamaica and Haiti (Giovannetti 2001, Guerra 1970).

While Cuba imported 780,000 slaves between 1790 and 1868, the Dutch colonizers brought about 700,000-800,000 households (about 35-40 percent of the households of Java under direct government rule) under the sway of the forced Cultivation System.⁷ The burden put on the population by the Cultivation System in practice varied widely according to region and crop. Resistance was widespread, hunger and deprivation occurred in a number of Residencies (administrative departments) of Java and corporal punishment to enforce the system was widely reported. In regions where the burdens were unbearable, extensive migration occurred. In the course of the 1850s, forced labor was gradually replaced by wage labor in the sugar sector, and by smallholder and plantation growing in the tobacco sector, but in the cultivation of coffee – a crucial source of direct income for the colonial government – forced labor lingered on during the entire nineteenth century. All in all the Cultivation System in combination with demographic growth created a massive semi-proletarian rural workforce that was dependent upon by-employment to make ends meet (Bosma 2011, Elson 1986, Knight 1988).

Thus the plantation sector in both Java and Cuba underwent an important, though different, evolution in labor relations from the middle of the nineteenth century. The technological developments and investments in infrastructure in the early nineteenth century allowed Cuba to open up new fertile areas for sugar production and in the short term made slave labor “more efficient in terms of the income produced by each slave” (Bergad 1989:97). In Java an opposite tendency was seen, precisely because the colonial government successfully created a semi-proletarianized workforce, a process that was further engendered by rapid demographic growth. Moreover, since sugar cultivation was inserted into irrigated rice cultivation, a balance had to be struck between cash crop and food production. There was a premium on

7. The share of the households involved in the Cultivation System declined over time, but 35-40 percent is reasonable estimate for the 1840s (Fasseur 1992:17). Java in 1850 had a population of about 12,500,000 and the average size of a household was 4.7. Not all parts of Java were under the sway of the Cultivation System however. The semi-autonomous Principalities (i.e. the Residencies of Surakarta and Yogyakarta) as well as private-owned land were exempted. The population of the Principalities, Batavia, and Buitenzorg and other private domains must have been about 3 million, which means that there were 2.0 million households available for the Cultivation System.

an efficient use of land, which was done by applying more and more labor to the cultivation of cane. Clearly this could be done easily under a regime of forced labor, where the price of labor was set by the colonial government; but it also continued under the more liberal labor market in the aftermath of the Cultivation System.

The labor-land ratio in the Cuba and Java sugar industry began to diverge in the 1840s and only became more pronounced over the years. Table 2 demonstrates the intensity of the Java industry compared to the Cuba, with substantially higher sugar yields per hectare but requiring a much larger workforce to achieve. The vast majority of this labor force was compulsory though wage labor was rapidly advancing. Meanwhile, the Cuban labor force in the sugar mills (*ingenios*) worked throughout the year to plant the cane, to maintain the buildings and equipment, and then to harvest the crop. Cuba only needed a fraction of the labor Java needed in the field, because its soils were fertile enough to allow the cane to stay for many years, and when the soil did become exhausted there were still many unexploited areas on the island that planters could move their operations to. Although three ratoons (new cuts from the same cane plant) were considered to be the optimum, usually many more ratoons were taken. This partly explains why the average plantation sugar worker in Cuba produced 2.5 times the amount of sugar as a worker in Java in the mid-nineteenth century (Moreno 1976:175, 1986:88-90, 190).⁸ But while the output per working day was much lower in Java the yield per hectare was almost twice as high as in Cuba, and this discrepancy continued to widen over the years. By the 1920s, Cuba was producing less than half the yield per hectare of the Javanese cane fields; but while Java's sugar factories were employing 10 percent of the adult male and 3.6 percent of the adult female population of Java around 1920,⁹ Cuba's sugar industry continued to have to achieve its production with a considerably smaller workforce.

8. According to the census report of 1899 the number of ratoons varied from 5 to 15 (*Report on the Census of Cuba 1899* by Sanger, Gannet & Willcox 1900:524).

9. According to the census of 1920 there were 9,435,919 men of 15 years and older and 10,876,338 women of 15 years and older on Java in that year. According to Levert (1934) about 55 percent of the labor force was male, 32 percent female, and the remaining 14 percent young adult. Dividing the 14 percent equally over male and female, one gets 610,000 male and 390,000 female workers employed for 100 days per year doing field work plus 400,000 males working as cane cutters and employed in the factories. For census data see *Nederlandsch-Indië Volkstelling 1920* Vol. II and Levert 1934:126.

Table 2. Land-labor ratio in Java and Cuban sugar plantations¹⁰

	Sugar workers		Cane land (hectares)		Workers per hectare		Sugar yield (tons per hectare)	
	1860	1925	1860	1925	1860	1925	1860	1925
Java	320,000	1,400,000	30,000	180,000	10.67	7.78	3	13
Cuba	219,715	320,000	277,715	866,288	0.79	0.37	1.85	6

With the ongoing shortage of labor in Cuba, intensified by the continuing growth of the sugar industry, much of the cane cutting had to be done by immigrant workers, in particular from Haiti, Jamaica, and other Caribbean islands, as well as poor rural Spanish immigrants. Although nominally free, these laborers (in particular the blacks) were often forced to work in conditions of threatened and actual violence that did not fall far short of those suffered by the slaves of the nineteenth century. They were also at the mercy of market instability – in high demand in times of economic strength, but in periods of economic crisis (such as that of 1920-22) finding themselves without work and means of support.

The sugar industry had an interest in stabilizing the labor force around the factory. This was achieved by employing skilled and supervising workers on a permanent basis, and weakening as much as possible the bargaining power of the armies of cane cutters. In Java, sugar factories had faced some problems getting sufficient labor in the 1860s and 1870s, but since the agricultural crisis of the 1880s labor had become abundant. Until 1920 nominal coolie wages (i.e. the wage laborers who were doing the fieldwork) remained practically stagnant and in decline in real terms. When some labor shortages emerged in East Java in the 1920s, immigrant labor could be attracted from other parts of Java and Madura. Mechanization of the heavy groundwork involved was pursued at some factories in East Java. This was not an option that would have made a difference for Cuba. Its plantation economy had already been short of labor before the abolition of slavery in 1886, but thereafter the shortage became even greater. The sugar industry was growing so fast that it needed more hands: between 1902 and 1930 about 800,000 immigrants arrived from Spain, while from 1917 onward the number of Spanish laborers declined and increasing numbers of West Indians and Haitians had to be allowed in (Carr 1998, De la Fuente 1997:33, McLeod 1998).

10. Sources: Ayala 1999:123, 125; Ayala 1995:106, Leidelmeijer 1997:329; Levert 1934:126, 217; Morbotter 1860:21; Moreno 1986:88-89, 190; Moreno 1976:175; Prinsen Geerligs 1924-31:147; *Nederlandsch-Indië Volkstelling 1920* Vol. II and *Report on the Census of Cuba 1899* by J.P. Sanger, Henry Gannet & Walter F. Willcox, 1900, p. 524.

In both cases the preservation of racialized colonial order complicated the labor issues. In early-nineteenth century Java, the colonial government decided against any large landownership by Europeans and white creoles for fear the island might be lost in the same way as Latin America had to be relinquished by the Spanish (Ottow 1937:238). Since the colonial government had explicitly rejected a *hacienda* economy in Java, other means to re-channel the existing labor force toward the emerging sugar industry force was necessary; and it was precisely for this reason that the Cultivation System was established. In the absence of a large existing population, particularly the expansion of sugar production in Cuba required the influx of workers – and most of these were forcibly abstracted from Africa as slaves. An estimated 780,000 slaves were brought to Cuba between 1790 and 1867, despite the outlawing of the slave trade by the British after 1807. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Cuban whites were concerned about becoming a minority;¹¹ and this led to the intensification of racial fears on the part of the white creole elite in particular – very conscious of the proximity of the black republic of Haiti. Although this resulted in a series of schemes during the nineteenth century to encourage white (or at least non-black) immigration, Cuba nevertheless remained dependent upon the continuing influx of African slaves in the nineteenth century, and of Caribbean migrant labor in the early twentieth, to meet their labor needs.

That the sugar industry in Cuba could survive in the context of a permanent shortage of labor was thanks to the island's fertility and the possibility of expanding into previously under-exploited land, which enabled the plantations to economize drastically on their agricultural work. This was not possible to the same degree for tobacco and coffee cultivation. Yet the burgeoning sugar sector created a growing demand during the harvest: since cane mowers were not available in colonial times, cane cutting was laborious and arduous. In contrast with the sugar industry in Cuba, in Java female and child labor were massively employed from the beginning of the Cultivation System, and the colonial government in Java could afford to experiment with a variety of labor-intensive crops and to apply immense amounts of labor on the cultivation of coffee in spite of the diminishing returns on land because of exhaustion of the soil. However, it would be misleading to suggest that an unlimited supply of labor existed in Java. During the heyday of the Java sugar industry in the 1920s, labor shortages emerged, particularly in East Java. As a result, the

11. In fact, they never formed less than 40 percent of the population (in the early 1840s), and generally outnumbered the non-white population throughout most of the history. By 1862, 60 percent of the population was white (600,000 Cubans, 116,000 Spanish, and 45,000 assorted foreigners) (Toledo 1864). In comparison, Java – whose population of 12.5 million in 1850 was about ten times that of Cuba – had a radically different racial composition, with only 23,000 creoles and Europeans.

Javanese industry invested in machinery that could do the groundwork, such as digging the Reynoso trenches.¹² Only with the introduction of wage labor in the Java sugar industry, as well as coffee and tobacco, did female and child labor become visible in the statistics. Much more work needs to be done studying and comparing the composition of the labor forces of the Cuba and Java plantation economies – and this needs to be done for the nineteenth century in particular, when the conditions were shaped that would give these islands their unique position in global commodity production.

TWO ISLANDS, ONE CROP, AND A GLOBAL MARKET

The sugar industries of Java and Cuba dealt with the issues of labor mobilization and control in their own distinctive ways, but within the parameters of preserving white domination for which they relied on an increasingly capital intensive mode of production as well as increasing control of a relatively small number of sugar factories over an ever-expanding area under cane. In Cuba, the abundant availability of land meant that planters felt able to overexploit their soil, since they could move on to new terrain when needed: scarcity of labor resulted in an extensive use of land. However, this unused land was by no means immediately available. Remote and inaccessible with little pre-existing agriculture away from the few population centers, it not only increased the demand for manual labor to clear it (thereby stimulating the need to maintain an influx of captive workers), it also stimulated technological development, particularly in the form of steam-driven railways and boats, in order both to reach and equip the mills, and then to transport the produce to the principal ports. At the same time, it required a change in land-ownership forms to facilitate the formation of plantations and further advances of the sugar industry. For Java the system of forced crop deliveries under the Cultivation System was gradually replaced by wage labor and by direct contracting between factories and holders of *sawah* land. The colonial government, however, set limits on the acreage of land that could be set under cane in order to safeguard the production of sufficient food crops. There was a premium on raising the output per acre, which made botany the key science for the Java sugar industry. Whereas labor-saving methods were employed in haulage and also the ploughing of the land, ratooning was taboo

12. The Reynoso system consisted of digging furrows to a depth of two feet, piling up the soil in between the trenches. The cane cuttings were planted in the furrows, which were then filled with soil again when the growth of the cane had progressed. This method ensured a deeper rooting of the cane, which enhanced its growth, and made it less vulnerable to strong winds.

in Java and hundreds of thousands of female and child laborers took care of the planting of and tending to the cane.

Although Java and Cuba display a number of topographical similarities, since they are located in opposite hemispheres little thought was previously given to the interconnections between them, or the comparison of the historical trajectories that launched both to the forefront of global sugar production in the nineteenth century. Studies into what factors contributed to their rise to prominence so far are wanting in global perspective. Sugar was already being cultivated in both islands before they rose to global prominence, but on a relatively small, undeveloped scale, overshadowed by the principal sugar producers of the eighteenth century. However, the revolution in Saint Domingue in 1791 quickly revealed how interconnected the world economy had already become: while it might have been predicted that neighboring Cuba would benefit from this, the Dutch were also quick to grasp the opportunity to push Java into the forefront of industrialized sugar production. Although the initiative in the former appeared to come from local forces, and in the latter from metropolitan forces, what was key in both was the presence of a dynamic bourgeoisie with close links to transnational, even transimperial, commercial networks willing to take the necessary steps to advance their respective sugar industries in terms of land cultivated, scale of production, and the introduction of the latest technological and scientific advances. The transfer of crops brought great wealth and power to creole planters' families in Cuba and Java and their entrepreneurship modernized sugar production through the introduction of advanced technology, such as vacuum pans and centrifuges, resulting in an extensive infrastructure to support commodity production. However, while this began through local initiative, the need to make the increasingly large investments required for such technology resulted in the islands' commodity agriculture falling under the control of metropolitan capital by the twentieth century, though with the continuing involvement and complicity of local elites.

In the process, both islands underwent significant changes in how land was controlled and cultivated and at the same time experienced substantial demographic change, as the sugar industry demanded ever greater mobilization of and control over labor. Here there does seem to have been a significant difference between Cuba and Java, which contributed to the specific development of each: put simply, Cuba had a shortage of labor coupled with a surplus of land; Java a surplus of labor concomitant with a growing shortage of land. However, it can be seen that far from separating their paths, this apparent dichotomy was possibly the two interconnected sides of a single dynamic. It was a dynamic that was brought about by a unique combination of global capital and technology flows and the right local political conditions for massive appropriation of land and control over the labor supplies. This eventually led to cane becoming the dominant crop on both islands, and to them dominating its global supply for such a protracted period.

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LOCAL GEOGRAPHIES OF CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
IN A PLANTATION COLONY:
GENDER AND INCARCERATION IN BARBADOS, 1878-1928

During a forty-five year period, 1873 to 1917, more women than men were committed to penal custody in Barbados, West Indies.¹ This was true for all but nine of those years, when the annual count fell just below half for women. This was a rare historical pattern, although the absolute (adult) female majority should be qualified in a number of additional ways. Typically the per capita rate of female imprisonment was below that for males, since females accounted for an even larger share of the population – and the labor force – of Barbados, particularly in over-20 age categories. Second, women received significantly shorter sentences than men and had fewer nonpenal committals (for debt, pre-trial detention, or in lieu of fines), so that male prison inmates outnumbered females by a daily ratio of a little over two to one. Third, the generational make-up of the male and female prison-bound populations differed significantly, with males concentrated in the younger age cohorts (20 and below) and most female convicts occupying age groups over 20, the generational categories where the (male-to-female) sex ratio was lowest in the population at large. Among juvenile offenders – those below 14 years old – males were in a decided majority (see Green 2010).²

These qualifications do not nullify Barbados' exceptionality. Comparable figures for Jamaica and Trinidad, covering at least parts of this period show,

1. A note on archival records: the Blue Books (on microfilm) and some reports (where indicated) were sourced from the Barbados Department of Archives. Barbados newspapers from the period were available on microfilm at the Barbados Public Library (BPL). All Colonial Office (CO) documents were obtained from the National Archives, Kew Gardens, London. The annual colonial reports ("Colonial Report") were accessed from the University of Michigan's Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library's microfilm holdings.

2. This situation was rendered more conspicuous by the fact that only males could be whipped. A frequent complaint at the Colonial Office was that "the whipping of juveniles is resorted to far more frequently in Barbados than in the neighboring W. I. Cols" (CO 28/285, "Floggings 1914").

roughly, an 18-20 percent female proportion among annual committals and, in the case of Jamaica, a slight female preponderance in plantation and urban sectors (higher crime areas) of the population as well. Moreover, during the large-scale, predominantly male migration to the Panama Canal construction zone (1905-1913), the relative feminization of the ranks of Barbadians committed to custody intensified, although imprisonment as a whole declined (see Chart 1). At the height of the migration, women constituted nearly two-thirds of those sentenced to penal custody – surpassing their representation in the labor force – and over one-third of the prison population on a daily basis. From 1906 to 1911, peak years of the Panama migration, magistrate court committals to penal custody of men aged 21-40 averaged a mere 27 percent of the total age group (probably placing the age-specific male per capita rate slightly below that of the female – see Table 2).³

Why did Barbados exhibit this unusual profile? There has been little documentation and interrogation of this historical curiosity in the Caribbean literature, although book-length studies of penal systems have been undertaken for other islands, and the important role of Barbados as a training and recruitment ground in the development of police forces elsewhere in the Caribbean has been investigated (Johnson 1973, 1986, 1991, Paton 2004, Trotman 1986). An ongoing investigation into the archival records so far sustains my preliminary conclusions. Applying political economic (“plantation economy”), intersectional (race-class-gender), and comparative frames of analysis, I have identified at least four critical features in two previously published articles (Green 2010, 2011): (1) the numerical and functional prominence of women and children in the predominantly, albeit paternalistic, wage-labor economy, (2) hegemonic and spatial entrapment within the ambit of near-total plantation monopoly and a concomitant dearth of subaltern spaces of autonomy, (3) high levels of male migration and the associated criminalization of so-called abandoned dependants, and (4) a more pervasive and institutionally entrenched system of law and order, and more widespread exposure to it, than elsewhere in the Anglophone Caribbean.

These conclusions have been drawn from an examination of the wider social or structural conditions of the “excessive” criminalization and incarceration of women and on the face of overwhelming, if still incomplete, evidence. The findings are summarized below to provide a context for the issues examined here.

In this paper, I am specifically interested in zeroing in on the phenomenon of incarceration itself: the class- and gender-inflected crimes which routinely warranted this form of punishment; the broader disciplinary regime

3. Blue Books, Barbados, 1907-12. The per capita calculation is based on an estimation of the female-to-male proportion of this age-group as slightly over 2:1. See Nag 1971:123, Table 6.

and penal ideology in which the imprisonment imperative and the institution of the prison were located; the gendered experiences of prison; and, ultimately, the transition to a new disciplinary regime. This transition – reflected in a shift from punitive corporeal technologies to proactive penological reform and rehabilitation, including a movement away from routine female incarceration altogether – became strikingly evident in the last ten years of the period under study. The new regime it ushered in was characterized by growing bureaucratic rationalization and structural modernization as well as by novel, transnationally mediated shifts in Afro-Barbadian consciousness, subjectivity, and agency.

One of the frames of analysis I invoke here in considering the specificities of both the colonial/British West Indian/Barbadian and the race- and class-inflected gendered patterns of penalty and incarceration, is that of social geography or spatiality, as both constitutive of and constituted by particular articulations of hegemony and autonomy, and as both material and discursive in form. I am particularly inspired by the ever-burgeoning literature on feminist or proto-feminist “colonial geographies,” which has begun to move more inclusively beyond a narrow focus on white women settlers and travelers to a more sustained interest in native and/or colonized communities.⁴ My own interest is in locating an examination of the carceral regime in Barbados, and specifically women’s experiences within it, in an approach which is sensitive to the spatial configurations of race-class-gender disciplinary relations in a classic plantation economy.

There are at least three socio-spatial scales that might be considered in investigating gendered penal systems in colonial contexts in general and the British West Indies in particular. The first is the metropole-colony circuit or “imperial network;” the second is the British West Indian colonial mode of “plantation economy,” and its particular (race-class-gender-inflected) hegemony/autonomy configuration in “local geographies;” the third is the gendered and gendering division of carceral space and experience. (A fourth focus might be on the micro-spatial scale of the body/person, which is only hinted at here.) In this paper, I focus predominantly on the third dimension, as embedded in the second, and not so much on the imperial connection. I am mindful nonetheless of Philip Howell’s reminder, in his important study of the regulation of prostitution in colonial Hong Kong, that “there really *was* an imperial system, a medical and political paradigm that informed practices throughout the Empire” (Howell 2005:176; see also Howell 2009). In the matter of penal policy and penal reform, the local was, indeed, always the outcome of a highly charged negotiation between and among the direct purveyors of imperial mandates (at both the metropolitan and the colonial

4. See, for example, Domosh & Seager 2001:140-73, Howell 2009, Mills 2005, Proudfoot & Roche 2005.

sites) and the local ruling classes in the colony (the sugar plantocracy in the case of Barbados). It is important not to lose sight of the ways in which the imperial was active in and constitutive of the local; however, the more salient analytical focus here is on local-colonial forms: the socio-spatial articulations among plantation economy, race-class-gender, and regulationist/penal systems. Naturally, it is hoped that this study also provides useful evidence of the connections among all three dimensions (the imperial, the local-colonial, and the carceral), and that more of this evidence can be marshaled in future analytical reconstructions of those connections.

GEOGRAPHIES OF CRIMINALIZATION IN BARBADOS

In Barbados, penal practice was shaped by the hegemonic imperative of controlling a seasonally employed, “superabundant,” and entrapped labor force with few of the nonwage, nonplantation livelihood options available elsewhere in the British West Indies. Interdictions (and hence criminalization) were focused against a free domestic labor market, labor emigration, the pursuit of independent subaltern livelihoods, and “vulgar” and potentially disruptive and competitive black presences in “civilized” and exclusive white spaces. In the March 19, 1921 edition of the liberal *Barbados Weekly Herald*, the editors felt compelled to spell out, for the umpteenth time, the connections among the plantocracy’s anti-emigration stance, their antipathy to an independent working class and their ongoing pursuit of cheap labor:

there are amongst us in high quarters a few who prefer to see a majority of our people always in a state of desuetude. They are strongly opposed to any such element as an independent poor. We know that emigration to Cuba has annoyed them immensely. They are wroth. They fear for a continuance of cheap labour for their plantations and in other branches of industry ... And they are prepared to oppose in the dark any proposal for emigration.⁵

This was a familiar theme, which had been sounded many times before, most notably during the earlier Panama exodus. During these early twentieth-century decades of high emigration, women constituted over 60 percent of the working population, predominantly as field laborers, and increasingly as domestic and own-account workers. As such, they fell victim to a punishing and paradoxical discourse that labeled them at once abandoned dependants and immoral deviants, and served to rationalize their criminalization.

The Barbadian landscape was dominated by the plantation, warranting its designation by “plantation economy” dependency theorists as the closest

5. *The Barbados Herald* (BPL, microfilm).

approximation to a “pure” plantation economy in the Caribbean. Its dominant features have been rehearsed in dozens of books and articles (for signature statements, see Best 1968 and Levitt & Best 1975). Around the turn of the century, a small white plantocracy controlled 90 percent of farm acreage, the bulk of which was devoted to monocrop cane cultivation and the production of sugar and its by-products for export. Workers were contractually bound to particular plantations through the “located laborer” system, a form of wage-tenantry which made an obligation to labor exclusively for the landlord at fixed, below-market wages a condition of rental accommodation and plot use on the estates. As Beckles (1990:8) has summed it up: “after emancipation a workforce which did not own homes, or have access to land, was created with an inbuilt dependency on the plantation.” The plantocracy also controlled the legislature, the judiciary, and both the central and parochial administrations, and, during this period, became increasingly integrated into the (also predominantly white-owned) commercial retail sector.

Class-gender formation and the negotiation of the mutual boundaries of hegemony and autonomy occurred to a significant extent within the ambit of the plantation sector (rather than across and between plantation and peasant sectors, for example). Unlike the situation in the “dual economies” of Jamaica and the Windwards, the laboring population in Barbados had few viable alternatives to plantation jobs or estate land. Labor services were performed in the context of a highly fragmented family wage system, unevenly incorporating men, women, and children into a regime of seasonal production. Notable features of the system included very high rates of participation by women under the pressure of plantation monopoly, the Contract Law, extremely low wages, and high levels of male emigration and alleged “desertion.” Women’s efforts to establish “independent” livelihoods, notably huckstering (petty trade) and prostitution, both “street” or “highway” occupations, also brought them face-to-face with the forces of interdiction.

The relative monopoly by the dominant plantation and related commercial sectors of economic time and space meant a high level of exposure of the working classes to the hegemonic “gaze.” Black, working-class female bodies were seen as economically unavoidable but socially transgressive, troublesome public presences that needed to be closely monitored and controlled. This was deemed especially urgent given the dearth of alternative or private arenas of social reproduction and discipline, and the fact that the women themselves were no shrinking violets. A number of conditions led to a foreshortening of working-class domestic space and patriarchal order and helped to fuel the state’s determination to “contain” this “abandoned lower class of females” (Green 2011).

Not only did the postemancipation subaltern Barbadian experience differ acutely from, say, the Jamaican in the (lack of) incidence of “free” villages, independent peasant formation, and singular and sustained nonconformist missionary support (see Newton 2008:267-68); also, high levels of wage-labor

exploitation and male migration left Afro-Barbadian working-class women particularly “unprotected” and subject to public scrutiny. These women had not been in a position to retreat from field labor into the inner sanctum of domesticity or the family economy in the postemancipation period, as had thousands of women in islands where peasantization flourished, affording an escape from the plantations (and stay-at-home livelihoods for men). They had the highest rates of waged labor force participation in the Anglophone Caribbean, which, together with their superior numbers, gave them a highly visible and audible presence in field and street. Around the turn of the century, these rates were matched by the highest birthrates and infant mortality rates, certainly among the larger British West Indian territories. The authorities assigned direct blame for the high infant mortality rates (as well as for juvenile delinquency) to Afro-Barbadian women, citing their promiscuity and, in an ironic semantic twist, their “abandonment.” In fact, as I have pointed out elsewhere, working-class Afro-Barbadian women were central, as exploited “re/producers,” to both the agro-commodity and the labor export economies (Green 2011:151).

Female preponderance in the population and labor force, established during slavery, was exacerbated in the postemancipation period by high rates of male emigration. In the first few decades after emancipation in 1838, the planter class reacted to the flight of labor from Barbados and the incessant labor-seeking expeditions of foreign recruiters into the island by passing a number of anti-emigration and anti-recruitment laws and, in effect, criminalizing what was deemed “abandonment” by men of their spouses and by parents of their children. In the 1860s, emigration took up speed again, having slowed down, as a result of interdiction, throughout the decade of the 1850s (Newton 2008:225-55, Roberts 1955:250). This time, the planter class chose to accept the inevitable, but proceeded to place ever more stringent controls on both the conditions of exit from and the conditions of life in Barbados. Laws that had been abolished in the 1840s were revived, including those around corporal punishment (Fletcher 1992:177). Women came under increased monitoring as largely “public” creatures (in their work and family provider roles), and as victims-now-turned-offenders.

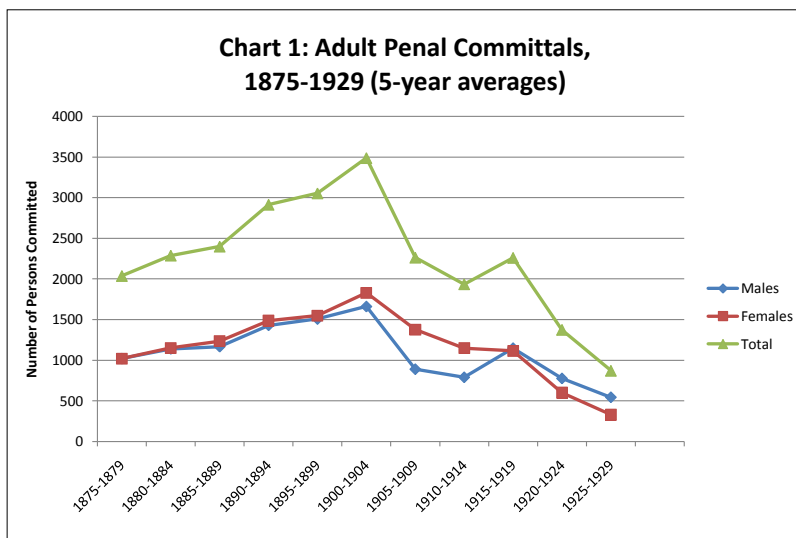
There was a notable spike in female imprisonment in 1873, when an Act was passed to further regulate emigration and establish an Emigration Office, under the supervision of a Superintendent of Emigration (Roberts 1955:257). As male emigration also surged that year, the numbers of prison-going men declined and they were replaced – by an almost identical count – by women. In the ensuing decades, up until the post-World War I period, women continued to outnumber men in committals to penal custody, based on increased prosecutions under the miscellaneous “highway, health, and revenue acts” and other acts “relating to the Social Economy of the colony.” These acts ranged from provisions for forcible subjection to “contagious diseases” inspection to the imposition of prohibitive license fees for huckstering

and other independent livelihoods. Violations of the highway acts typically included “blackguarding” and “disorderly conduct,” behaviors regarded as particularly unseemly in women. Working-class women also offended frequently under the “personal injury” acts, as beleaguered subjects who were in a daily fight for their own and their children’s survival.

This pattern of female crime and prosecution was clearly associated with women’s prominent roles in the public economy and the exacerbating conditions of large-scale male labor migrations. Most importantly, it reflected the authorities’ belief that these “abandoned” dependants lacked the proper “restraining” influences at home, requiring the state to step into and fill the moral and disciplinary void. The petty nature of the crimes prosecuted leads one to conclude that this was a process of criminalization rather than a manifestation of rising deviant behavior.

Other factors, of course, influenced crime and punishment levels. The newly established tradition of female majorities among prison-goers was interrupted in the years of large-scale political and hunger riots in Barbados (as in 1876 and during the 1890s, respectively), when men were targeted for mass arrests. On a more routine level, crime followed a seasonal rhythm, as the authorities often pointed out. Levels rose during the pre-harvest or “out-of-crop” season (September to January inclusive), when there was high unemployment, and declined during the “in-crop” season. The incidence of crime, like so many other things in the colony, was therefore closely tied to the vagaries of plantation-based livelihoods.

In the larger scope of things, the period under review defines the beginning through the ending of a historically specific era of penal justice in Barbados. The period of the Panama exodus and related inflow of wage



remittances, followed by World War I and an aftermath of return and repatriation, coincided with a process of industrial restructuring and corporatization of the Barbados sugar economy as well as with changing requirements in favor of skilled and nonagricultural labor. These new conditions called for a more “modern” and “civilized” gender-typing of the occupational and moral economies of the island, reconfiguring women as belonging to the private and men to the public spheres. Pressures for this came from both the white male-dominated corporate sector and returning black male anticolonial nationalists. These new sensibilities were reflected not only in the onset of a sharp divergence between the penal tracks of men and women after World War I, but also in a pragmatic and philosophical rethinking of imprisonment and the punitive prison agenda as effective disciplinary models.

The high levels of criminalization of Afro-Barbadian women therefore rested on a number of conditions partly peculiar to Barbados: the hegemonic plantation-economy and labor-control – and management – regimes, which dominated, intruded upon, and colonized the lifeworlds of the subaltern classes (though not without contestation); women’s numerical and functional prominence as producers and reproducers in the fragmented family wage-labor system; and large-scale male labor migration, which spurred longstanding racial, class, and patriarchal motivations for the local colonial state to act as the public disciplinarian of “abandoned” black working-class women and children.

In the following sections I take a closer look “inside” the gendered (and classed) nature of crime, imprisonment, and the punitive prison agenda, paying special attention to the experiences of women.

THE SCOPE AND GENDER OF WORKING-CLASS CRIME

The lack of autonomous subaltern space in Barbados was reflected in the lack of escape from the disciplinary panoptic of the Barbadian state. Economic and spatial entrapment meant constant ensnarement within the dragnet of property and police statutes and the summary justice of police magistrates’ courts. Several thousands of Barbadians were reported to or arraigned by the police for various offenses every year, resulting in new charges that criminally implicated between seven and ten percent of the Afro-Barbadian population on an annual basis (not counting those already in the criminal-justice system). On average, about three-quarters of those charged were convicted, receiving sentences that ranged from fines to imprisonment, with hundreds of boys and some men being summarily whipped or flogged in discharge of the whole or a part of their sentences.

A ban against the flogging of women had been undertaken (though not always enforced) since the 1820s, but no such reservations extended to routine female imprisonment. Children as young as seven were also liable to be

imprisoned for petty offenses. Girls did not have separate prison facilities as boys did, and they were incarcerated along with adult women in female wards or cells. All classes of prisoners, male and female, young and old, were subject to hard labor regimes, which were regularly mandated by the sentences handed down by both police magistrates and the Chief Justice. The *Barbados Herald* of Monday, August 11, 1879, reported, for example, the arraignment, in the Court of Grand Sessions, of Sarah Frances Nunes and Thomasine Christian Nunes, sisters (the latter only nine years old), on the charge of "uttering counterfeit coin." Sarah Frances was sentenced to six months' and Thomasine to one month's imprisonment and hard labor. The case was also reported of Duncan Payne, a little boy, who was sentenced to nine months of hard labor for criminally assaulting a little girl.

Most of the charges against adults and juveniles fell into three categories: personal assault and injury offenses, "praedial larceny" and other offenses against property, and various offenses against public order and revenue ordinances (ranging from violations of the Contagious Diseases Act and non-payment of various fees, licenses, or fines to public nuisance or disturbance-of-the peace charges). As pointed out above, the bulk of women's crimes were related to public order and personal injury infractions. In the 1901-1902 Colonial Report, it was estimated that "as much as 55.18 per cent of the annual crime of the female population" involved "disorderly conduct, using abusive language, and so on to assaulting and beating."⁶ Three years later, the Governor of the Prison again noted that most of the female prisoners had been convicted of "highway offences, such as blackguarding, fighting, using indecent language on a highway etc.," adding (in relation to their frequent violation of the "silent system" within the prison) that "it is not to be wondered at that it is a difficult matter with them to hold their tongues."⁷

Men were more likely to be convicted of serious assaults and cases of severe "bodily injury" within the overall category of crimes against the person. They were also more likely to be convicted of crimes against property, ranging from petty praedial and chattel larceny and less serious "offences against property other than praedial larceny" to more serious "malicious injuries to property" and breaches of the Masters and Servants Act. As a discrete and singular category, "offences against the person" constituted the largest category of crime. In the fourteen-year period, 1892-1905, this category averaged 3,088 or 30.8 percent of 10,029 average convictions a year.⁸ Women's involvement in this type of crime tended to be of a less injurious nature and fewer women than men were charged with felonious assault and injury.

6. Colonial Report, Barbados, 1901-2, p. 42.

7. "Report on Gaols and Prisoners 1904," *Official Gazette* (Barbados), March 16, 1925.

8. Blue Books, Barbados, 1892-1898; Colonial Reports, Barbados, 1901-1902 to 1905-1906.

In a population of less than 200,000, the numbers involved in the criminal justice system at one level or another seems inordinately large. In the three years, 1903, 1904, and 1905, 16,479, 15,996, and 17,176 respectively were reported to the police; 14,804, 14,110, and 14,750 were apprehended and charged; 10,510, 10,060, and 10,809 were convicted; and 3,391, 2,873, and 3,083 adults were committed to penal imprisonment, with hundreds more being committed for nonpenal imprisonment (see Table 2).⁹

Table 1: Charges, Summary Convictions, and Superior Court Indictments, 1880-1929 (5-year averages)¹⁰

Year	Population (est.)	Charges	Summary Convictions	Superior Court Indictments	Total % of Population Convicted
1880-1884	172,400	10,897	8,071	136	4.8
1885-1889	177,500	10,983	7,611	94	4.3
1890-1894	183,060	11,629	8,853	93	4.9
1895-1899	188,000	12,516	9,294	110	5.0
1900-1904	195,220	15,635	11,213	91	5.8
1905-1909	197,200	13,377	9,730	51	5.0
1910-1914	173,107	14,630	10,987	56	6.4
1915-1919	188,693	17,433	13,319	97	7.1
1920-1924	166,092	15,753	11,672	89	7.1
1925-1929	166,648	13,897	10,019	58	6.0

Table 2: Adult Prison Committals for Select Years: Number of Persons for All Purposes, Number of Persons for Penal Purposes, Number of Times Committed¹¹

Select Years	Adult Persons (All Purposes)		Adult Persons (Penal only)		Adult Committals (Total times committed)*	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1904	1,455	1,611	1,321	1,552	1,996	2,286
1908	959	1,370	844	1,285	1,287	1,907
1912	1,052	1,233	909	1,153	1,561	1,738
1914	1,235	1,267	1,012	1,180	1,815	1,720

* This column includes both nonpenal and penal (re-)committals.

9. Colonial Reports, Barbados, 1903-4, pp.17-19; 1904-5, pp. 15-17; 1905-6, pp. 19-21.

10. Source: Blue Books, Barbados, 1881-1930; Colonial Office, Barbados Annual Reports.

11. Source: *Official Gazette* (Barbados), March 16, 1925: "Report on Gaols and Prisoners 1904."

Table 3: Magistrate Court Committals by Gender at Height of Panama Exodus, 1906-1911
Age Group 21-40 (males as % of total)¹²

	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911
Males	366 (26%)	273 (25.8%)	369 (30.6%)	303 (28%)	263 (27%)	238 (25.6%)
Females	1,028	784	837	773	711	693

The vast majority of crimes committed by Afro-Barbadians were lesser “police offences,” as noted by Conrad Reeves, the colored Chief Justice of Barbados and a rare nonwhite entrant into the inner sanctum of elite officialdom in the late nineteenth century. In his testimony to the 1897 Royal Commission, he averred, “I may safely assert that ours is, on the whole, a peaceful, orderly, and law-abiding population.” He nevertheless admitted that “cases of larceny, some of them technically grave, and of injuries to the person, sometimes by resorting to the use of knives or razors, in sudden and senseless quarrels, come before the Superior Criminal Court at its periodical sitting.” And, according to him, there was one truly noteworthy exception to the low rate of grave crimes: “setting fire to cane fields,” which was done “very often to hasten crop operations and thereby furnish employment or better wages to field labourers.”¹³ Indeed, “offences against property other than praedial larceny” accounted for the largest share of convictions in the Superior Courts during the entire period under study. Deliberately set cane fires made up a large proportion of this more serious class of offenses. Female incendiaries were certainly not unknown, women’s class motivations being the same as men’s in this regard. In April 1907, for example, Jestina Morris was turned in for “lighting a field of canes at Haggatts plantation” (Richardson 1985:99).

Apart from such gendered felonies as “abortion,” “concealment of birth,” “rape,” and “murder of wife, reputed wife, or concubine” (which were usually single-digit statistics), the only gender-identifiable magistrates’ court crimes that were enumerated were those relating to prostitution and the Contagious Diseases Act. While the numbers formed just a small part of the body of female crimes, they provided the centerpiece of an inflated state discourse about loose and immoral women. In the second half of the nineteenth century prostitution had come under regulation in many parts of the empire, primarily as a way of protecting the health of British soldiers and sailors who purchased the sexual services of native women. Philippa Levine (2003:204)

12. Source: “Report on Gaols and Prisoners 1904,” *Official Gazette*, March 16, 1925.

13. Report of the West India Royal Commission (London: HMSO, 1897), Appendix C, Vol. II (Part III: Barbados), p. 223.

has noted the significance of prostitution “in the maintenance of colonial order” and the role of the Contagious Diseases Act in defining the boundaries of heterosexual interracial sexual contact in the colonies. The Act, which was modeled on British domestic legislation, was passed in Barbados in 1868, and, as elsewhere, it “required that women accused of being common prostitutes be registered, periodically examined for venereal disease, and if diseased, incarcerated in a certified hospital ward” (Trotman 1986:250).

In 1869, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty offered to contribute the sum of £2,500 “towards the building of a Lock [Contagious Diseases] Hospital at Barbados, and also to pay quarterly a sum not exceeding the rate of twenty five pounds per bed per annum for forty beds, so soon as these beds shall have been prepared, and every arrangement made for the reception and treatment of Lock patients under the Act.”¹⁴ The Hospital remained open for some twenty years, its eventual closure marking to a degree both the marginalization of the West Indian sugar colonies in Britain’s global empire and a shift in the normative imperial boundaries of officially “protected,” informally sanctioned practices of acceptable racial-sexual colonial intercourse. In addition, it had proven impossible to rein in unruly and unauthorized local sexual service providers under the provisions of the Act. In 1886, when a repeal of the Act was being considered by the Barbados legislature, following its abolition in Britain, the Visiting Surgeon of the Lock Hospital, F.B. Archer, was ambivalent about this move. While he did not support repeal, he felt that the current act was, at any rate, too weak:

The Act has done much good in the past, and kept down disease amongst a certain class of prostitutes but the powers of it are too limited, and it does not touch a very large class of women, who keep open houses and spread disease recklessly.¹⁵

In January of 1889, the Admiralty confirmed its decision to continue its subvention to the Lock Hospital in Hong Kong, but not the one in Barbados, rendering the latter (which had already been closed for some years) practically defunct.¹⁶

On the whole, the pattern and frequency of women’s crimes (and their criminalization by the state) were strongly tied to their public economic roles – as field workers, street vendors, sex workers, de facto household heads – and the state’s perceived need to establish authority over them in the absence of would-be private patriarchs. The other side of this was the concern to rid

14. CO 28/210, the Admiralty to the Undersecretary of State, Colonial Office, April 27, 1869.

15. CO 28/301 (“Report of the Prison for the Year 1921”), p. 555.

16. CO 28/226 Admiralty, January 11, 1889.

public space of the contaminating and disruptive presence of unruly black female bodies/defiant and proactive women.

It is important to note that the historical quest to remove women from public spaces was not confined to the colonies or to the colonial experience. Literature on England, for example, has noted the correlation between the complex and public forms of women's pre-industrial occupations and public forms of social control, such as the courts and the prisons, and, conversely, between the increasing shrinkage of women's economic roles and retreat into domesticity in the nineteenth century and the privatization of the social control of women (Feeley & Little 1999, Zedner 1991). Lucia Zedner and others (for example, D'Cruze & Jackson 2009), writing on women and crime in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century metropolitan societies, have suggested that increasing confinement to the home and withdrawal from the public space limited women's opportunities to commit crime. Zedner, however, neglected to add that Frances Kellor (1901:171), a turn-of-the-century U.S. sociologist she cites as a proponent of this theory, had additionally noted a markedly different situation for U.S. "negro women." The parallels, including the discursive articulations of gender and race, cannot be missed:

But the facts for negro women are very different and conditions are such that they cannot well avoid immorality and criminality ... Necessity compels them to work and the negro men do not discourage it ... White men have little respect for the sanctity of family life of negroes, when they would hesitate to enter the Anglo-Saxon's home. Negro women are expected to be immoral and have few inducements to be otherwise.¹⁷

The attribution of Afro-Barbadian women's crimes to their own ingrained (and at more generous moments, situational) immorality, coupled with the absence of proper patriarchal restraints in the home, similarly pervaded official penal discourse in Barbados for most of this period. The assumed posture of inducing a proper and orderly patriarchal regime among ex-slaves took on extreme racialized dimensions throughout the Americas that served to "moralize," "mythologize," and "whiten" Euro-Americans as much as it served to "immoralize," "mythologize," and "blacken" Afro-Americans. With by far the largest (class-differentiated) white minority among the British West Indian plantation colonies, Barbados provided perhaps the clearest illustration of this obsessive colonialist/racist particularization of class-gender processes and forms that were hardly historically unique.

17. For a very different historical standpoint, see Gross 2006.

GENDERING OF CARCERAL SPACE AND SPATIALIZATION OF GENDER

There was a perennial problem of accommodating the thousands who were sent to prison every year in Barbados. The numbers expanded seasonally and, as noted above, surges occurring in years of “potato” or political riots involved mostly male prisoners. The proper accommodation of girls and women had often been sacrificed to the need for additional room for boys and men. Early prison accommodations had been notorious for overcrowding and indiscriminate grouping of miscellaneous classes of prisoners. Hamilton noted that 1,306 males and 335 females imprisoned for debt between 1870 and 1875 “were liable to be locked up at the Town Hall Gaol in wards containing thirty or more, where no discrimination apart from that of sex, was made between short-term prisoners and those awaiting trial for serious crimes, young or old offenders, respectable women and prostitutes” (Hamilton 1956:8). He has also provided a useful synopsis of the postemancipation evolution of prison accommodations:

At the time of Emancipation the only gaol had been the Town Hall in Bridgetown, consisting of cells underneath the building where the Courts of Justice still meet and where the Legislature assembled up to 1875. Shortly after, District Police Stations were erected with lock-ups, but these proving insufficient, it was found convenient to send prisoners sentenced by the Magistrates to Bridgetown. These were lodged in the Town Hall Gaol, which in its turn became congested, so that a large prison, Glendairy, was erected for long-term prisoners. (Hamilton 1956:10)

Glendairy was built in 1855, with accommodations for male and female convicts. The female section, or Lower Building, was organized on the “associated” or open-ward system, which became a huge point of contention as prison officials later bought into the idea that the close commingling afforded by this system had become the source of much evil within the prisons. In 1876, as an aftermath to the riots that filled the colony’s jails that year, the Town Hall Gaol was declared unfit and arrangements were made for the relocation of the mostly male prisoners who had been housed there. To make room for them, the women were evacuated from Glendairy’s Lower Building and re-settled in all-female district lock-ups. Boys also got their own district prison.

Between the closing of the Town Hall Gaol in 1876 and the renovation of Glendairy in 1892, only adult males were confined there, while female prisoners were accommodated in prisons attached to two police stations, District “A” and District “C,” under the supervision of female Matrons and male Superintendents. All the District prisons were on the associated or open-ward system, which became a mounting source of dissatisfaction for those prison officials who sought to minimize collusion, solidarity, and moral contami-

nation among the prisoners. Although limited by budgetary constraints, the authorities became increasingly preoccupied with arrangements for “isolating” and “separating” different classes of prisoners. At different times, they regretted their inability to separate juveniles from adults, habitual from first-time offenders, detainees awaiting trial from hard labor prisoners. Glendairy was eventually remodeled in 1892 on a fully “separate system” (based on individual cells) to accommodate all the hitherto scattered classes of prisoners in the colony in one space. It became the colony’s only prison, making the differentiation of carceral space by gender, age, and class of crime an increasingly central preoccupation of the authorities. Before that, local officials were constantly bemoaning the evils of the “associated ward system,” which, they were persuaded, gave full rein to the spread of “bad influences.” Inspectors like F.B. Smith were convinced that the associated system “afford[ed] opportunities and temptations for breaches of discipline.”¹⁸ It was generally felt that “until the recognized principle of strict separation [was] adopted, ... it [was] vain to look for the efficient carrying out of the Convicts’ sentences and the maintenance of good order and regularity.”¹⁹

The concerns of the authorities also extended to the appropriateness of the site and location of the prison, especially with regard to adequacy of isolation from the contaminating influences of subaltern communities. Communication and contact both among inmates and between inmates and the world beyond the prison gates were constant sources of anxiety. In his 1878 report, F.B. Smith, then Acting Inspector of Prisons, worried about the location of Glendairy and its proximity to a working-class neighborhood of questionable character:

Altho’ otherwise well located, a disadvantage attending the position of the Prison is, that it is not sufficiently isolated: it is overlooked by persons residing on the slopes on the eastern side, and on the opposite side there are several houses occupied by persons, some of whom are discharged Convicts and in some way connected with the Inmates of the Prison, and who frequently disturb the quiet of the Prison in the evening by the playing of Drums and Fifes just outside the boundary wall, a proceeding which no doubt, affords amusement to the Convicts in the Upper Building, but seriously affects the discipline of the Prison.²⁰

Smith noted that a proposal to purchase the land on the offending side, which was under consideration by the colony’s Executive Committee, might solve the problem. The concern to solidify the divide and maintain an effective dis-

18. CO 321/26, p. 615.

19. CO 321/26, pp. 609-10.

20. CO 321/26, pp. 608-9.

tance between the inside and outside was also deeply gendered. Male convict labor was extensively engaged on public works, performing indispensable and largely unpaid service for the colony in this regard and saving the government a great deal of money. Their outside occupations involved a variety of public works, "stone quarrying, stone breaking, reconstructing breakwaters, reconstructing roads, levelling land, repairing walls."

Anxieties about allowing female (and juvenile) prisoners beyond the walls of the prison abounded and strict prohibitions were eventually imposed. Having cleansed public spaces of these raucous presences, the preoccupation then became to contain and confine them within the gated compound of the prison. This spatialization by (embodied) sex was itself a form of gendering or constructing gender: the imposition and teaching of a new gender discipline and inside/outside gender regime. After the Surgeon recommended against using the prison backyard for stone breaking at District Prison "C" in 1878 because of the lack of shade and access to breeze, the women were allowed to break stones just outside the prison walls under the shade of trees. In his report, Smith registered his disapproval of this indulgence, favoring the erection of a shed in the backyard to accommodate the women's labor, "as then the Convicts, by being removed inside, would be prevented from seeing their friends passing to and from the Magisterial Court, which is held at the Station to which the Prison is attached."²¹ After a ban on female stone breaking in 1899, there were other attempts to relax the rule of no outside work for women, as in 1904, when a gang of women was employed to prepare land for cultivation in the gully just outside the prison boundary. However, "[a]s this kind of employment was found to have an injurious effect on the discipline, instructions were given for its discontinuance."²²

Carceral disciplining (and a re-gendering) of women included a number of steps over the years: strict containment within the prison compound, isolation within individual cells in contrast to the communal arrangements of the open ward, and compartmentalization into different classes of female violators. The influence of "common prostitutes" on the other female prisoners received special attention. All the women who were punished for breaches of the provisions of the Contagious Diseases Act were incarcerated in District "A" prison. Violations included various forms of refusal to comply with the summonses and provisions of the act as well as breaches within the hospital, once they were registered. F.B. Smith reported in 1878 that 89 "of these characters" were committed to prison that year, and that "of that number of convictions 39 were for breaches of the Rules of the Lock Hospital." He worried that "with the evils of the Associated system to contend with, it can well be imagined that such Prisoners – who are known to be most depraved and aban-

21. CO 321/26, pp. 616-17.

22. "Report on Gaols and Prisoners 1904," *Official Gazette*, March 16, 1925.

doned – cannot fail to have a damaging effect upon the rest of the Inmates.” He suggested that alternative provision might be made for their imprisonment “within the walls of the Lock Hospital itself.” He reasoned, “Apart from the evils above alluded to, such offenders go to Prison suffering from disease, and during their imprisonment are not under the strict care of the Surgeon as they would be if they underwent their imprisonment in the Hospital where they could both be punished and medically treated at the same time.”²³

When they were unable to extricate themselves from the insinuating tentacles of the system, Afro-Barbadians attempted to re-define the terms of their entrapment. As much as the authorities aimed to contain, isolate, and divide, the prisoners sought to sustain collective and communal ties. It was often remarked what little effect short stints in prison seemed to have on irrepressible Barbadians, whose comrades “joyfully” greeted them at the prison gates upon their discharge. Such voluble evidence of communal solidarity irked the authorities, and they devised measures to remove opportunities for its expression and to seal the boundary between the outside and inside.

The plan had been all along to renovate the Lower Prison at Glendairy along the lines of the “separate system” and re-introduce women into that singular institution. The remodeled extension was completed in early 1892. It consisted of a second story added to the old building, and the associated wards divided into cells, constituting a total of 128 cells, instead of the previous 40 cells and 6 associated wards. The Upper Prison was also renovated to provide an expanded number of 275 individual cells to accommodate male convicts. Despite the extensions, there was chronic (and seasonal) overcrowding in the prison, which necessitated occasional reversion to “association.”

At the time, the 1892 renovations satisfied the officials that punishments could finally be properly enforced, and that “notorious bad characters can now be separated, and kept by themselves.”²⁴ Many of the female prisoners, on the other hand, appreciated the conviviality that the associated ward system afforded, and even preferred doing hard labor (which they otherwise despised) to being confined to a cell all day long, since it gave them a chance for companionship. Regarding the new system of cellular isolation, the Governor of the Prison observed that, “the women hate being placed in a cell by themselves, so much so that a Magisterial sentence of 7 days simple imprisonment is much more disliked than one of 7 days hard labour.” He mentioned the example of “an old offender who had been to prison several times under the old associated system, [and] returned during the year under a sentence of one month’s imprisonment with hard labour, in default of paying a fine of 19/. She refused to pay the fine, but when she found that she was placed in a cell by herself, she soon elected to pay the fine.”²⁵

23. CO 321/26, pp. 616-17.

24. Blue Book, Barbados, 1892, BB 7.

25. Blue Book, Barbados, 1892, BB 7.

Prison was becoming a grim and lonely – perhaps less corporeally abusive, but more soul-destroying – business. The price of reform was the suppression of the more open battle of wills and daily standoff that pitted warders, who had to rely on their own wits and idiosyncratic, sometimes abusive, methods in asserting authority, against the colloquially expansive and irrepressible individual and collective personalities of ordinary working and often destitute women who felt that they had been ambushed by an unjust system. Confinement to individual cells tended to disarm and silence them, which was exactly the result it was intended to produce.

PRISONER PROFILES, CARCERAL REGIMES

Women typically served shorter sentences than men, but had higher rates of recidivism so that prison was essentially a routine, revolving-door experience for hundreds of them. Although recidivism was high across the board, and the vast majority of sentences were for less than three months, a higher percentage of men received longer sentences, so that, on any given day, the numbers of male inmates significantly exceeded those of women.

High recidivism rates among women became increasingly evident toward the end of the 1870s. In every single year between 1899 and 1917 women had higher, often much higher, recidivism rates than men. Between 1899 and 1914, they averaged a yearly recidivism rate of roughly 61 percent, while the male rate was around 56 percent. The six-year average rate at the end of 1917 was 66.38 percent for women and 55.73 percent for men.²⁶ In 1912 alone nearly 70 percent of female prison-goers were repeat offenders, while only half of the men were.

In 1903, 96 percent of prison sentences handed down to women were for one month or less, the corresponding figure for males being 84 percent.²⁷ In looking at the daily average prison population per annum of males and females according to length of sentence for the twenty-year period, 1899-1918, we find that women significantly outnumbered men (only) at the one- to four-week sentence level. Among male magisterial prisoners, between 1890 and 1910, the largest group was made up of those serving prison sentences of one month to 23 months. Around 1912 (a year of drought and temporary moratorium on Panama recruitment), both Superior Court convictions and magisterial sentences appear to have increased among men. Subsequently, at a time that largely coincided with the ending of the Panama migration, the largest group of offenders among the daily prison population shifted into the category

26. CO 28/301 ("Report of the Prison for the Year 1921"), p. 555.

27. Colonial Report, Barbados, 1903-4, p. 19.

of men serving sentences of two years and upwards.²⁸ Interestingly, this shift occurred among women as well, although they made up only around 25 percent of the category as a whole. This development, which should be considered in conjunction with the overall decline in female imprisonment (and the earlier transition from batch to cellular accommodations), supports the notion that imprisonment was becoming a more specialized penological project and was losing its “mass,” everyday, disciplinary function.

The largest group of female offenders tended to be in the 21 to 30 year-old age range, while the age group containing the largest number of offenders among males was the 14 to 20 year-olds. In addition, the 31-40 year-old female offender group was always notably larger than the male, indicating that the bulk of women committed to prison were in their prime reproductive years. Indeed, women were liable to be imprisoned while in various stages of pregnancy, and they were sometimes forced to give birth in jail; or, they entered prison accompanied by breastfeeding infants, whose lives were put at risk by prison conditions. Miscarriages, delivery of lifeless full-term fetuses, and infant deaths were recurrent aspects of life in the women’s prison. In one particularly bad year, 1886, six infants died in the female prisons.²⁹ In 1892, out of “fourteen accouchements, four infants were born dead – had been dead some time before birth; two were born prematurely and lived only a few hours ... One infant died from diarrhoea.”³⁰

Apart from the “hard bodily labour” or male-specific corporal punishment that might form part of their sentences, prison inmates could be punished for violating the rules of the prison, usually on the order of a Visiting Justice whose job it was to adjudicate complaints against the prisoners. Punishments were generally gender-differentiated, either by kind or by degree. Solitary confinement and punishment diets or meal deprivation applied to all, although prison diets on the whole were tailored to assumed age- and gender-related biological differences and prison-assigned levels of physical activity. Gender-specific punishments included corporal punishment and labor by treadmill and shot-drill for men and “hair cropping” and manacle-type restraints for women. The latter cruder forms appear to have been discontinued early on in the period under study, as part of Colonial Office’s determination to promote “humanitarian” gender-appropriate discipline. However, these reforms were not incorporated without contention and often considerable local pushback.

Hair cropping of female offenders had been reluctantly abolished by local authorities in the middle of 1877 at the urging of the Secretary of State.³¹ It was brought back, however, as a punishment sanctioned by the Visiting Justice

28. CO 28/301, Table 1X, p. 559.

29. Blue Book, Barbados, 1886, BB 1.

30. Blue Book, Barbados, 1892, BB 14.

31. CO 321/26, p. 625.

for violations of prison rules. In his 1878 report, the arch-disciplinarian, F.B. Smith, had raised a red flag about the impact of the ban on those few women “who have been guilty of using obscene language and of general insubordination and on whom the ordinary Prison punishments have no effect.” He felt that “if hair cropping is sanctioned at all, it should occupy a similar position in the Female Prison to that of corporal punishment in the male, and be ordered by the Visiting Justice subject to the approval of the Governor.”³² Other officials shared his concerns and his advice was heeded. In 1882, in District Prison “A” for females, there were six cases of hair cropping. There were also five cases of work in ankle straps and one case of work in irons. That same year, there were two cases of hair cropping in District Prison “C”; the next year, these increased to “[f]ive cases under Rule 259 in addition to solitary confinement: one had her hair cropped twice during the year.”³³

Corporal punishment for men and hair cropping for women were rituals of humiliation and direct bodily assault that sought, respectively, to threaten or un-make the hegemonically imagined manhood and womanhood of the inmates. These gender-specific penalties were ranked together with periods of solitary confinement ranging from 7 to 28 days as major punishments for prison offenses. Punishment diets and meal deprivation were considered “minor punishments.”

As a gender-specific equivalent of flogging, hair cropping was also statutorily imposed as part of the sentence for certain felony convictions. In 1885, an act was passed requiring the inclusion in sentencing of a mandatory penalty of flogging for men and hair cropping for women convicted, at the Court of Grand Sessions, of wounding with “a knife, razor, or other sharp instrument in cases of personal and sudden quarrels.” According to legislators, this practice had become alarmingly common in Barbados of late, and needed to be “put down as being cowardly and of evil example.” A female with this conviction would be ordered “to have her hair cut close on being committed to prison and kept close while undergoing imprisonment and until discharged from prison.”³⁴ This felony penalty remained on the books for over two more decades. In April, 1905, Henrietta Louisa Martindale of Beckles Road pleaded not guilty to an indictment charging her with wounding one Frances Clarke on March 15. She was found guilty nevertheless, “and having a bad record was sentenced to 18 months hard labour and her hair to be kept cropped during the period.”³⁵

32. CO 321/26, p. 625.

33. Blue Book, Barbados, 1883, BB 7.

34. *The Barbados Herald*, April 6, 1885 (BPL, microfilm).

35. *The Barbados Globe and Colonial Advocate*, April 5, 1905 (BPL, microfilm).

From about 1890, the use of corporal punishment and solitary confinement as routine methods of discipline within the prison declined significantly.³⁶ The male numbers (based on orders of Visiting Justices) declined from a high of 42 counts of corporal punishment and 47 of solitary confinement in 1882 to a low of 4 and 2 counts respectively in 1898. In the 1906-7 annual report the Chaplain of Glendairy Prison was quoted as having observed that the discipline of the institution "compare[d] most favourably with that of twenty years ago." He claimed that "[c]orporal punishment and solitary confinement ... figured largely in those days, but now they are found to be few and far between."³⁷ In addition, physical applications such as hair cropping and bodily restraints or weights such as ankle straps and irons no longer show up in prison reports as typical forms of punishment for the most recalcitrant female offenders.

Corporal punishment sentences for over-16 adult males handed down by the Chief Justice also declined in the opening decades of the twentieth century. In 1914, only two such sentences (each of twenty strokes with the cat) were imposed, both for wounding.³⁸ Five years later, in 1921, there were, similarly, two cases.³⁹ Labor by treadmill and shot-drill (carrying cannonballs around for purely punitive purposes) was largely confined to the nineteenth century. Eventually, the sheer wastefulness of this labor dawned on the members of the planter class making up the colony's Executive Committee. In 1897 and 1898, this labor was entirely suspended (though still officially in force), "as all available Prison labor was employed on Public Works by order of the Executive."⁴⁰

Assignment of the hard labor gangs to more productive occupations was also clearly gendered. In the period leading up to 1899, women's prison labor had included, variously, stone breaking, pumping water from a well, picking oakum⁴¹ (assigned to the Lock Hospital prison inmates), beating and preparing coconut fiber for mattress making, cooking prison food, washing prison clothing and bedding, and cleaning. Although preferred by some women to solitary confinement, the work was notoriously arduous. In 1883, for example, 1,684 cart-loads of stone were broken by the prisoners at "A," "which stone was used in the manufacture of concrete in the Glendairy extension."⁴² In 1892, female prisoners at Glendairy converted 3,773 lbs of coconut husk into fiber.⁴³ In 1898, their production of fiber amounted to 2,528 lbs.⁴⁴ Men

36. Blue Book, Barbados, 1898, Table XI, BB 13.

37. Colonial Report, Barbados, 1906-7, p. 14.

38. CO 28/285, p. 202.

39. CO 28/301, Table X, p. 559.

40. Blue Book, Barbados, 1898, BB 8.

41. This involved separating strands of old tarry rope to make caulking material for sailing vessels.

42. Blue Book, Barbados, 1883, BB 7.

43. Blue Book, Barbados, 1892, BB 8.

44. Blue Book, Barbados, 1898, BB 7.

worked at a far greater variety of occupations, some requiring significant skill, including shoe repair, tailoring, carpentry, blacksmith, painting, and masonry work. They also worked outside the jails on quarrying, road-work and building repair and construction projects. Some of their in-prison work, like tailoring, bread-baking, mattress-making, and cooperage, was carried out at various times on a commercial basis.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD NEW DISCIPLINARY EMBODIMENTS AND SPATIALITIES

Reform measures mandated in 1899 by the Secretary of State for the Colonies limited the number of lashes for adult men to 24 and for male juveniles to 12, and exempted females from stone-breaking.⁴⁵ However, proactive reform did not begin to impact the Barbados prison system until the 1920s. Clearly, a proper investigation of all the metropolitan-colonial circuits and dynamics of reform must await another stage of the research, but it is generally true that the landmark reform policies originated in the imperial center and underwent a contentious process of political negotiation in the colonial periphery. It is therefore likely that when, in his report for 1921, O.L. Hancock, the Governor of the Prison, openly declared his dissent with standard prison policy, he was echoing (or appealing to) a gathering sentiment in certain official circles. Indeed, while unambiguous about identifying the prison system (and not the prisoner) as the object of his reproach, he was careful to couch his assertiveness within the extenuating context of a larger imperial mandate: “a change is necessary if our prison system of education is to be brought up to the standard maintained in England.” Nevertheless, in the world of prison reports, his sharply enunciated advocacy on behalf of the (male) prisoner was unprecedented, whatever the deeper interests motivating it:

It is open to discussion whether or not the somewhat obsolete system under which the Prison is worked is not responsible for many of the defaults recorded against the prisoners. The majority of thinking people will admit that it is not reasonable to expect any human being to break stones from day to day, and to eat the same type of food without real variation, for TEN YEARS without doing *something* to break the dreadful monotony of life. Unless mental or physical diversion of some sort is provided, it is safe to assume that, sooner or later, outbreak against such unnatural conditions of life are bound to occur.⁴⁶

45. CO 28/252, p. 280.

46. CO 28/301, p. 553, capitalization and italicization in original.

Hancock suggested frankly that prison reform would kill two birds with one stone, serving the interests of both the prisoner and the state:

if properly equipped carpenters and blacksmiths shops were added to the Prison, and skilled Warders employed to teach the trades to selected prisoners, not only would the prisoners reap enormous benefit and on release be able to earn a decent living and thus cease as an expense to the Taxpayer, but the cost of work done for the Public Works Department would be greatly reduced.⁴⁷

In a rare expression of humanity, he claimed that his motives stemmed from “a desire to help the prisoners, who are not as bad as public opinion would make them and to make the Prison as efficient and self-supporting as local conditions will admit.” His proposals for a shift in focus from an irrationally punitive to a productively rehabilitative strategy included better training for the warders as well as provision of equipment and instructors for prisoner education.

This concern for vocational training and post-prison employment of prisoners did not seriously extend to the female department. Female prisoners typically had higher levels of illiteracy than male prisoners, the rate that year being 49.72 percent in contrast to a male rate of 43.15 percent. The Blue Books reported far higher numbers of male prisoners “under instruction” than female. However, a new regard for their development as proper moral – if not meaningfully skilled – subjects was becoming evident. The women had been the beneficiaries of “a most interesting and valuable lecture” given by a Dr. Fairfax, who also presented the Prison Chapel with two “very beautiful pictures.”⁴⁸ The policy shift indicated by this approach was facilitated by new lows among female prisoners as the decade progressed.

The advocacy of Hancock and others who sympathized with his position led to the inauguration of a scheme for the “after-care” of discharged prisoners in 1927. According to the authorities, the “scheme was made possible by the willing co-operation of the local branch of the Salvation Army, the officers of which have undertaken to perform the duties involved in this welfare work.”⁴⁹ Ex-convicts were given food, placed in jobs, and assisted with tools, lodging, travel, and small grants of money. Women made up 25 percent of those so assisted, in part reflecting their reduced numbers among prisoners.⁵⁰ The Prison Chaplain and Governor of the Prison were members of the After-Care Committee, confirming the idea that imprisonment and criminal

47. CO 28/301, p. 553.

48. CO 28/301, p. 554.

49. Colonial Report, Barbados, 1927-28, p. 19.

50. BDA, Barbados Prisons Department, Report, 1928 and 1930, Chapter 9, 4; Supplement to *Official Gazette*, May 14, 1931, p. 4.

justice were now beginning to be seen as related to a larger context of social welfare and development.

The postwar concerns of local elites were increasingly linked, on both a rhetorical and a substantive level, to preoccupations with moral and economic salvageability and social integration, or what Malcolm Feeley and Deborah Little have referred to (in the case of England) as “civilizing processes” (Feeley & Little 1999:292-99). The forty-six or so years bracketed between 1873 – when there was a surge in female imprisonment in the context of increased state-sanctioned male emigration – and 1919 – when there was a sharp drop (by an almost identical number), in a context of increased male returns – define a very specific era in the penal history of Barbados. In 1919, the numbers of women sentenced to penal custody dropped by 500 or over 38 percent from the previous year, while the male numbers fell by 286 or about 21 percent. By 1925, the authorities were observing that although the numbers had declined for men, the daily average was “still higher, however, than in the years 1907 to 1913, the lowest being 121 in the year 1911, while those for females are the lowest recorded during the past 30 years.”⁵¹ In fact, a closer look at the record reveals that they were the lowest in more than fifty years. These new numbers clearly indicated that the era of routine incarceration of Afro-Barbadian women for daily petty offenses was coming to an end.

The decreased resort to imprisonment and, within the prisons, to punitive corporeal technologies and forms of humiliation, while partly the result of imperial pressure, was also congruent with the processes of peripheral-capitalist modernization and the demand for new embodiments and sensibilities of gendered working-class subjectivity in Barbados. These new forms called for clearly differentiated gender tracks, one for men and one for women. A number of changes in women’s occupational status and social profiles were connected with the decline in female imprisonment. For one, women were the leading edge of a growth in urbanization. Between 1871 and 1921, the population of St. Michael, the urban parish, increased by over 50 percent. Women accounted for over 60 percent of black residents in both 1911 and 1921.⁵² In the process they were moving increasingly from outside (field and street) to inside (domestic) work, with regard to both paid occupational and unpaid social roles.⁵³ Zedner (1991:44, 54) has suggested that domestic service tended to be incompatible with female criminality, given the high “respectability” requirements of the occupation: “a good character,” “[being] presentable,” and “very high standards of dress.” At the very least, the

51. Colonial Report, Barbados, 1925-26.

52. Barbados Censuses, 1911; 1921.

53. By 1925 there were more people in domestic service (the overwhelming majority of whom were women) than there were female agricultural workers.

“inside” occupation removed women from those everyday conditions that conduced to their commission of and prosecution for “outside” street crimes.

The massive withdrawal from the labor force, particularly from agricultural jobs, that took place among women across the subregion between the 1920s and 1950s (although more moderately in Barbados) has been characterized by a number of Caribbean feminists as part of a process of “housewifisation” (see especially French 1988). In keeping with similar trends identified in the wider literature, women were increasingly subjected to private patriarchal disciplinary regimes and pressured in the direction of heteronormative bourgeois respectability. They were being safely contained “inside.” This new interiority involved both socio-physical space and mode of personal subjectivity. At any rate, women’s relative withdrawal from the labor force took place under duress and in the context of a movement for masculinist restoration, of both pro- and anticolonial varieties.

However, women were also re-inscribing themselves and turning imposed restraints into new opportunities, especially given some access to the “Panama money” in circulation, as well as to variously expanded transnational circuits of working-class reproduction. Proactive measures adopted on their own behalf included emigration and lower rates of childbearing. Between 1861 and 1921, Barbados experienced a net emigration, of 103,500, that was only one-third female, and a decrease in the sex ratio from 870 (males per 1,000 females) to 675 (Lowenthal 1957:455, 466; Roberts 1955:275-76). In the decade 1911-1921, however, women accounted for nearly 44 percent of net migration, with the United States as their primary destination (Roberts 1955:275). The majority of those who rushed to beat the deadline imposed by the restrictive 1924 Immigration Act identified themselves as domestic servants and seamstresses by occupation.⁵⁴

The disciplinary forces that were inducing a transformation in the character of the female labor force from “disorderly” or “unruly” field laborers and informal street workers to “self-controlled” inside workers came from both beyond and within the circuits of working-class reproduction. In a way, Barbados became the site of intersection of *two* transnational circuits, one constituted at the “top” by relations of official imperialism, the other constituted at the “bottom” by relations of global-capitalist labor migration. The latter also marked the movement of the center of world imperialism from Britain/Europe to the United States.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a rough-and-ready form of justice – involving little or no due process or recognition of the rights of the detainee – delivered sentences of summary imprisonment with hard labor and rituals of humiliation and corporal punishment to mostly petty offenders among Afro-Barbadian working people. By the mid-1920s, with growing

55. Colonial Report, Barbados, 1923-24, p. 20.

requirements for new kinds of workers and social sensibilities, and simmering demands on the part of newly conscientized returnees for (racial, class, manhood, and nationhood) rights and recognition, a certain type of penal reform secured a firm foothold in the public agenda. One should be careful not to overstate the case, however, as Table 1 shows an increase in convictions even as imprisonment declined. This moment needs to be understood as marking a change in forms of social control or the beginning of a shift from one disciplinary regime to another, and not as a simple story of linear human progress. This was especially true for women, who were now increasingly subjected to limiting discourses of female modesty and domesticity, and ultimately the need for submission to proper male authority in both the private domestic sphere and the emerging public battlefield of postcolonial citizenship and nation.

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DISCOVERING ONE'S OWN C.L.R. JAMES

C.L.R. James and the Study of Culture. ANDREW SMITH. Houndsmills, Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. vi + 174 pp. (Cloth US\$ 80.00)

You Don't Play With Revolution: The Montreal Lectures of C.L.R. James. DAVID AUSTIN (ed.). Oakland CA: A.K. Press, 2009. viii + 334 pp. (Paper US\$ 18.95)

Since it is commonly accepted that every generation rewrites history according to the personal proclivities of its historians and the *zeitgeist* of the times, no one should be surprised that this has happened with the life and work of C.L.R. James. "Everyone," says one of James's closest followers "has his own C.L.R." (Look Lai 1992:206).

Beyond the standard sociology of knowledge explanations regarding social and economic context, how does one explain the varying interpretations of this brilliant Trinidadian's whole life and work spanning over five decades and covering four continents? Is it Wilson Harris's explanation that James had a distinct ability "to appear very different in contrasting lights" (quoted in Henry & Buhle 1992:1)? Might it have been James's Caribbean "plasticity," i.e., being steady in identity but constantly shifting identifications strategically (Maingot 2002)? Were James's bold political maneuverings and capacity to adjust and prosper intellectually due to what Anthony Bogues, in a brilliant biography of James, calls his "Caribbean audacity" (Bogues 1997)? Or might it be that James wrote on so many topics, was involved in so many political groupings, without ever being personally or ideologically dogmatically subservient to any, that his appeal has remained broadly humanistic in a universal sense? Might it be all of these in combination?

In a trenchant analysis of James's enduring appeal, Humberto García Muñiz describes the wide range of Jamesian American, Canadian, and West Indian followers in academia, trade unionism, and cultural studies (García Muñiz, forthcoming). They represent a veritable constellation of outstanding performers. There is no equivalent figure in the Caribbean. Evidence of all

this is the enormous corpus of work on James. In the years since his death in 1989, there have been at least three dozen scholarly books, including five biographies, as well as the appearance of a "C.L.R. James Journal." There is now a C.L.R. James Institute but there have long been C.L.R. Centers. Ralph Gonsalves (2010:56), a future prime minister of St. Vincent, relates how as a student at Manchester University he deepened his knowledge of Marx, not at the University but by paying regular visits to the "CLR James Centre" of that city. Significant evidence of James's stature is that even V.S. Naipaul has gotten into the act, and as we have come to expect, he is hardly flattering. In *A Way in the World*, Naipaul returns to his oft-repeated theme of the unrealistic ambitions of black radicals resulting from personal humiliations (Naipaul 1994). The character of Lebrun, according to Bruce King (1995:209-21), is C.L.R. James, a man misled by the hardly compatible combination of Marxist dreams and Black Nationalist urges. No surprise, therefore, that in 2001 the Director of the American Studies program at New York University argued that C.L.R. James had attained a stature "now matched only by Du Bois" (*The New York Times*, August 4, 2001, p. A-15).

Predictably, as each person pursues the James of his or her choice, there have been occasional manipulations. In 1978, in a new edition of James's 1953 *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In*, the editors left out the final chapter of the original (Eakin 2001:14, 17). One can readily understand that when James states in that final chapter that the book "is also a claim before the American people, the best claim I can put forward, that my desire to be a citizen is not selfish nor a frivolous one" (James 1953:202), it would grate on the sensibilities of the partisans. Similarly, officials of James's estate refused to allow publication of one of his essays, "My Life with Women" (Henry & Buhle 1992:1). It was hardly a guarded secret that James liked women, and as Caryl Phillips of *The Guardian* wrote, "freely indulged" in many affairs.¹ Sad that we cannot have James's own version of this crucial aspect of his life.

A critical element in any full analysis of James is the fact that he never wrote a full autobiography. The closest he came to leaving an autobiographical record is on pages 30-46 in *Beyond a Boundary* and in a few of the 200 letters he wrote to his love, and later wife, the American actress Constance Webb. According to the scholar who edited them, it is in these letters, full of intimate sentiments, that "James found a way to articulate much that gave meaning to his own life and work" (Grimshaw 1996:1). We now add two new volumes to our sagging shelves of books on James. And, once again, they convey the James that suits either their intellectual or their political agendas.

Andrew Smith is a Scottish sociologist who reproduces here articles that he has contributed to several scholarly journals dealing with the sociology of

1. Carl Phillips, "Obituary Constance Webb," *The Guardian*, April 15, 2005.

sport, theory, and culture and society. This explains the particular focus of the book. He is explicit as to “his” James: “in what follows, I have acted as proponent for James” (p. 15). It is the James of eclectic and independent intellectual disposition, of a peripatetic life, of “supple, creative and humanist Marxism,” the man with a “glint of utopianism” in much of what he wrote. But fundamentally, “‘my’ James is particularly the cricket-loving James” (p. 19). Of course, Smith, as he readily admits, shares James’s love of the game. It is no surprise, therefore, that absolutely the best parts of the book deal with both the macro-sociological and individual fine points of James’s approach to the “style” of the game. James, says Smith, places a much more concerted emphasis on understanding the “specific intrinsic qualities of cultural practice than have most writers in the sociology of culture” (p. 37). For those not acquainted with the arcane ways of cricket, some of Smith’s elaborate details will be hard to follow. On the other hand, true *aficionados* will relish his forays into the rituals and forms of both cricket players and cricket audiences across continents. Those same *aficionados*, however, will be confused by the following assertion by Smith: while indeed going beyond what most Marxists do, “James perhaps owes more of a debt here to Trotsky than he sometimes admitted: compare Trotsky 1991 [1925]” (p. 37). For one not versed in Trotsky’s approach to the sociology of culture, this is, to say the least, the kind of assertion that puts James in an enigmatic light and as such deserved more elaboration from Smith. It is hardly “cricket” to leave this unexplained. There are other assertions in Smith’s book that cannot go unchallenged. It is outrageous, for instance, for Smith to claim that James broke with Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah because Nkrumah “followed Williams’ ‘path into autocracy and reaction’” (pp. 8-9). This is taking the advocacy of James beyond the pale, distorting both Ghanaian and Trinidadian history. Equally questionable is Smith’s assertion of the oft-repeated story that James had the decisive part in the origination and virtual writing of Williams’s doctoral thesis and later book, *Capitalism and Slavery* (p. 8). It is time to lay this claim to rest.

This version was given some authority by Ken Boodhoo, who quotes a letter from James saying that he not only suggested the thesis, but actually sat down and wrote what the dissertation should be (Boodhoo 2001:159). There can be no denying that the James-Williams relationship was a mentor-student one since Queen’s Royal College days in Trinidad. One has to exercise certain caution, however, in such claims by James. He was positively paternalistic about his influence on those he considered his “pupils.” In a long letter to Constance Webb (whom he calls “my most precious pupil” and from whom he “expects even more than from Bill [Williams]”), he says the following about Williams (Ph.D. Oxford), Grace Lee (Ph.D. Columbia), and Raya Dumayarskava (economist): “Now I am as confident about you as I am about them and when I began with them, with every one, *they had no real idea of their own talents*” (Grimshaw 1996:163, emphasis in original). Are

we to believe that Dumayarskava, who was for years Leon Trotsky's secretary and translator, learned nothing from the Great Man?

It is of course true that Williams acknowledges (on page 268 of *Capitalism and Slavery*) that "the thesis advanced in this book is stated clearly and concisely and, as far as I know, for the first time in English" on pages 38-41 of James's *Black Jacobins*. It is good that he specified "in English" since anyone who wishes to revisit those celebrated pages will notice that James introduces his theoretical framework with the words, "This section is based on the work of Jaurès's *Histoire Socialiste de la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1922), pp. 62-84." Indeed, in those 22 pages Jaurès establishes the role of the capitalist *negrières* slavers in Nantes, Bordeaux, and Marseille and their self-serving advocacy of abolition in the British colonies. Financial gain, not religion or humanitarian impulses, dictated their stance. Williams had made French history one of his fields of concentration and was fluent in French. No surprise, therefore, that he read, and cited, many of the French historians who followed Jean Jaurès's historical materialist interpretations of the relationship between slavery and capitalism. His conclusion that "What was characteristic of British capitalism was typical also of capitalism in France" (Williams 1944:209) follows logically from his readings. Selwyn Ryan, author of the most complete biography of Williams, is only partly correct when he notes that despite the originality of Williams's contribution to this issue, "his book appeared at a time when the thesis was dominant and he must have been influenced by the prevailing neo-Marxist discourse" (Ryan 2009:39). The thesis was dominant in France but hardly in England. Williams explains why this was so in several pointed and bitter passages in his autobiography, *Inward Hunger*. He recalls how even Fabian Harold Laski was not well thought of at Oxford (Williams 1969:23) and how the most left-wing publisher in London would not consider his manuscript because the materialist thesis was "contrary to the British tradition" (Williams 1969:53).

These facts are crucial beyond the historiographical issue at hand. In England, or the United States for that matter, history students would have had difficulty finding a Marxist tutor, much less a politically active one. In France, the Marxist and Socialist activists dominated the highest echelons of higher education and Jaurès was their leader, their "tribune" according to H. Stuart Hughes (1961:75-6). Jaurès shaped a whole generation of socialist intellectuals who went on to dominate the political life in France of the 1890s. He had attracted the best young scholars, including no less a figure than Emile Durkheim to the "moral passion" of Marxism.

This difference in educational structure and milieu explains in part why no *Marxist* socialist (as distinct from *Fabian* socialist) ever came to power in the English-speaking Caribbean. In the French Caribbean they not only held the highest departmental posts, they held them for very long periods. Aimé Césaire is only the best-known of these.

The David Austin reader is another book that illustrates the search for a particular James. His James is the James of what is generally called the "Walter Rodney" period, the period of Black Power *cum* Marxist mobilization in Canada and the West Indies in the late 1960s. It is interesting that this volume of James's speeches in Canada during this critical period should be published by "AK Press," run by self-admitted "anarchists," since neither James nor most of his many followers were any such thing. The volume's real value for Jamesian scholars is not just the up-to-now-not-available speeches and interviews James delivered in Canada in 1966, but the inclusion of an interesting exchange of letters between James, his ideological adherents and the latter with each other. Together they provide an exceptional insight into the vivacity and excitement surrounding James which gave the movement the impulse it showed decades later. Again, there are gaps which future research will have to fill. One such is the possible role of James in the various radical movements that agitated the region in the 1970s, including importantly the attempted *coup d'état* in Trinidad in 1970 (Ryan & Stewart 1995:1-21, 543-78, 579-606).

Be that as it may, what one finds here is the consistently radical but also consistently ideologically independent James. Perhaps the most revealing interview is the one that gives this book its title: a 1962 interview with the *McGill Daily*, entitled "You Don't Play with Revolution" (pp. 227-38):

[James's response to the reporter's question about the search for African roots:] I don't know that people should go into African culture with the idea of bringing elements of the African culture to the West Indies and America. First of all, the West Indies and America are two very different places. America has a culture of its own. It has an attitude to the world – social, political, and otherwise. To bring African culture to that is quite a problem. I don't see it as something realistic. But what I think one can learn is a sense of nationalist politics. The West Indian is very backward in regard to that, and the African has no trouble in being an African nationalist. That, I believe, he can learn. But I don't know that that is a part of culture in the sense in which we are using the term.

[Reporter:] I would like to quote once more from your book *Party Politics in the West Indies*. You say here that "Political power, a dynamic population which knows its political power, a backward economy. That is a potentially explosive situation...." And you have a footnote here which says, "Marxism equals 'communist' equals r-r-revolution. That is the fashionable logic. I am a Marxist, I have studied revolution for many years, and among other things you learn not to play with it." Could you elaborate this?

[James's response:] By the way, let me say that I do not believe it will be easy for any autocratic regime to impose autocracy on the Caribbean

population. I say there are the two alternatives [a left-wing or a right-wing coup] and I would like to say the domination, the forced domination and submission of West Indians by an autocratic government would be very difficult. It would be wrong for me to go further, speculating as to what will happen ... but I pose the two alternatives.

Here is the peripatetic James, ranging brilliantly across a variety of topics but unwilling to be pulled along mindlessly by any of the ideological currents of the moment. To be sure, scholars and politicians will keep searching for “their” particular James, but as with Marx, beyond the opportunistic reading, there has to be ultimately the honest assessment: he was an intellectual who marched to his own drum. That drum, to conclude, had two fundamental tenants which no amount of historical rewriting, intellectual juggling, and vulgar hagiography can erase: James was categorically opposed to any form of state capitalism and opposed also to the idea that the revolutionary masses had necessarily to be led by a Stalinist-like “vanguard” party. James, in short, was a Marxist for the ages, not just the one we opportunistically find convenient for our present agenda.

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WEST INDIAN SOJOURNERS IN GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS

Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration to Honduras, 1890-1940. GLENN A. CHAMBERS. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010. xii +202 pp. (Cloth US\$ 35.00)

Black Labor Migration in Caribbean Guatemala, 1882-1923. FREDERICK DOUGLASS OPIE. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009. 145 pp. (Cloth US\$ 65.00)

The place of people of African descent in the history of Central America is often overlooked by academics. There is a general understanding that thousands of West Indians built the Panama Canal and that Belize was a little piece of the British Empire on the mainland, but there are many small towns along the Caribbean coast of Central America where the majority of the population is made up of people of African descent. There are thousands of people in the region whose ancestors came from Africa, not Europe and not the Americas, and even more people are of mixed African descent. Some arrived as slaves with the earliest Spanish settlers and others followed until emancipation in the early twentieth century. These people were concentrated in rural areas like the cacao plantations of Costa Rica. They were runaway or shipwrecked slaves, and worked transporting goods from one coast to the other, before the construction of the Panama Railroad. Later, between 1850 and 1950, hundreds of thousands of West Indians ventured to and through Central America in search of work and other opportunities.

Whenever or however they arrived, people of African descent in Central America lived on the margins, both geographically and socially. They established roots, formed communities, and created, especially along the Caribbean coast between the Yucatan peninsula and the Darien Gap, a belt of villages and towns that were culturally and conceptually beyond the grasp of the mainstream societies of the region. Some groups, like the Garifuna of Honduras or the Creoles of Nicaragua, are well known to researchers. Yet, there were many others who lived a less isolated existence side-by-

side with Hispanics in coastal centers like Limón, Puerto Barrios, Managua, Tegucigalpa or San José, where their African heritage and identity was either overlooked or consciously ignored. During the colonial period miscegenation provided some with an entry into mainstream society, but most lived lives that were apart. The painful birthing process of independence from Spain did not create many opportunities for people of African descent in Central America, who continued to live in the shadows of the emerging nation states. Then, in the later half of the nineteenth century, with the mass migration of workers from across the Caribbean region, the place of people of African descent changed in Central America.

Initially, foreign workers were welcomed as a means of attracting foreign investment and developing new industries without putting pressure on the existing labor supply. They built the Panama Canal and several railroads, worked in mines, and established plantations along the tropical lowlands of the Caribbean coast. Shortly after men began arriving, their families followed and new communities were established. Despite their sacrifices and their many contributions to the prosperity of Central America, governments and some pressure groups in the region soon began to fear the growing presence of these particular foreigners. Familiarity bred contempt and as the isolated Caribbean coast was opened up for investment, Central Americans came face to face with the challenge of the encroachment of Caribbean migrants on the mainland.

Two new books, one by Frederick Douglass Opie and the other by Glenn A. Chambers, offer original and valuable insights into the lesser known histories of labor migration to the Caribbean coast of Central America. *Black Labor Migration in Caribbean Guatemala* and *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration to Honduras* are perfect companions for the study of two of the most obscure and least studied West Indian communities in Central America. They join the existing literature on West Indians in Central America, which is mainly focused on Costa Rica and Panama, and offer a similar, but different perspective on the experience of Caribbean migrants to the region. They are, therefore, welcome and innovative additions to the study of immigration and settlement along Central America's Caribbean coast and provide students of the African Diaspora with new reference points.

Frederick Opie begins by setting the historical and geographical stage for Africans in Guatemala. His emphasis is on the fact that the presence of Africans dates well back into the Spanish colonial period and that the arrival in the 1880s of laborers from Caribbean and U.S. ports was a continuation of an historic trend. He then concentrates on the rapid increase of West Indian migration, which resulted in foreign-born workers of African descent becoming the largest segment of the workforce on Guatemala's Caribbean coast prior to the Great Depression. His book documents the dangers and challenges that greeted people when they arrived in a country with an entrenched racial hierarchy where political turmoil was the rule and where justice was a matter

of power relationships. A major factor in both the attraction of workers and the reaction against them was the role of the International Railroad of Central America, the United Fruit Company, and other foreign-owned corporations. Once Opie establishes a foundation, he looks at the rise of radicalism among workers in response to their concerns over wages and working conditions and the general climate of racism that prevailed. Garveyism and labor radicalism come together in a series of strikes, culminating in 1923 with the arrest and deportation of the principal agitators, all of whom were of African descent.

Similarly, Glenn Chambers examines the period of heightened Caribbean immigration to Honduras between the early development of banana plantations along the north coast in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the backlash against foreigners that resulted in the deportation of West Indians in the 1930s. The story of the West Indian experience in Honduras is told in a way that allows Chambers to focus on the government's reaction to the perceived threat posed by Caribbean sojourners. Honduras was one of the first countries to begin cracking down on West Indian immigrants, imposing a total ban several years before the neighboring republics did so. The reasons for the Honduran government's more stringent attitude toward immigrant labor was the result of a combination of its significantly weaker national economy and the stronger regional economy of its Caribbean lowland region. Unlike Costa Rica, and Guatemala, where sectors like the coffee industry generated employment in the highlands away from the banana plantations, the north coast of Honduras had long played a highly significant role in the country's economy. Therefore, the Caribbean lowlands were more densely populated in Honduras than comparable regions elsewhere in Central America. As a result, the problem of foreign labor was more visible and more contentious because West Indians came into more direct competition with Honduran nationals. Another important issue was that Honduras already had a significant indigenous African population in the form of the Garifuna communities of the north coast. Racism toward people of African descent had a longer history in Honduras than elsewhere in the region.

In Honduras, as in Guatemala, West Indian workers formed communities and became politically active in groups like the Universal Negro Improvement Association, all of which made them a target for reactionary politicians and others who saw them as a threat. This threat is often characterized as being purely racial, but it was much more complicated than that because the foreigners worked for foreign companies, and attacks on West Indians were attacks on the corporations they worked for. This combined with various problems associated with the nature of the banana industry and national political struggles to make pariahs of all people of African descent.

Opie and Chambers shed new light on these little-known chapters in the West Indian diaspora to Central America. Like the corporations they worked for, West Indian workers often ignored formal restrictions on their actions

and movement to and through the region. For geographical and strategic business reasons, the fruit companies routinely established plantations in the grey areas where legal jurisdiction was a question of international relations. As third country entities, the multinationals could exploit weaknesses or strife on one side of the border simply by shifting operations from one plantation to another. As a consequence, a proper reading of the history of the banana industry and multinational involvement in Guatemala and Honduras requires an understanding of events as they unfolded on both sides of the international boundary. The two books complement each other because the banana plantation regions they study were located in the border region between Guatemala and Honduras, and there was much interaction between communities along the Caribbean coast of Central America. Ideas such as Garveyism and information about such things as working conditions or labor strife floated up and down the coast, without regard for the international boundary. Both books are worth reading – ideally together, to get a full picture of the little-known history of West Indian labor in this part of Central America.

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THE (IM)POSSIBILITY OF TIME TRAVEL:
HAITI'S PRE- AND POST-EARTHQUAKE FUTURES

Travesty in Haiti: A True Account of Christian Missions, Orphanages, Fraud, Food Aid and Drug Trafficking [second edition]. TIMOTHY T. SCHWARTZ. Charleston SC: Booksurge, 2010. xlvii + 262 pp. (Paper US\$ 15.99)

Haiti in the Balance: Why Foreign Aid Has Failed and What We Can Do About It. TERRY BUSS. Washington DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2008. xvi + 230 pp. (Paper US\$ 28.95)

Backpacks Full of Hope: The UN Mission in Haiti. EDUARDO ALDUNATE. Waterloo ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010. xx + 230 pp. (Paper US\$ 34.95)

At a conference called “Reimagining Haiti” (April 2010), scholar Robert Fatton surprised some when he asserted that Haiti was “heading back to the future.” Hearing this and reflecting on my own experiences during the Haitian earthquake of 2010, I thought there was no way Haiti could ever move into a pre-earthquake future. The country is no stranger to disaster – both natural and manmade – yet the 7.0-magnitude quake precipitated a humanitarian response that was totally foreign. Tens of thousands of relief workers rushed to the scene, multimillion-dollar debts were cancelled, and billions were pledged. The resources committed to Haiti seemed to be enough to rebuild an entire nation. If only it were that simple.

When it comes to Haiti, there are donors and then there are pledgers. Nations like Cuba, which sustains numerous hospitals and clinics throughout Haiti, and Venezuela, which singlehandedly funds a regional powerplant in northern Cap-Haitien, are donors. Meanwhile, nations such as France, Canada, and the United States, which promise billions but seldom follow through, are pledgers. It's clear that what Fatton meant is that no amount of debt forgiveness or donations, real or illusory, will steer Haiti from its familiar path unless serious changes are made in the way the international

community interacts with the government of Haiti and, equally important, unless NGOs are held accountable for the work and services they perform.

Since the first ouster of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991, “failure” has been the dominant analytic paradigm of Haiti. The earthquake, evoking metaphors of collapse and ruin, has only reinforced this perspective. It’s worth stating that “failure,” as with food security or income level, is nothing more than an indicator used to package and represent a complex set of relationships, processes, and phenomena (Woodson 2007). The amount of analytic material bundled up in such indicators can prove overwhelming; this justifies their existence but also accounts for how easily they can be taken for granted. However, when we think about what “failure” actually represents, we paradoxically learn more about the failure of the political-economic structure that has been foisted upon Haiti than about the failure of democracy or good governance in Haiti (Schuller 2007a). As a result, few analysts prove up to the challenge of discussing the mammoth problems Haiti faces without resorting to the banal discourse of failure. Much of the literature published on the heels of the earthquake reflects this (Frechette 2010, TIME 2010).

Sometimes what makes failure such a persuasive endpoint is the narrative track authors take. Contemporary writers on Haiti tend to follow one of three tracks, focusing on foreign powers run amok, a predatory state apparatus, or an underdog civil society (Schuller 2007b). Unfortunately, most writers pursue only one of these tracks to the exclusion of the others. Of the books under review, only Timothy Schwartz’s *Travesty in Haiti* tries to give a three-fold view of the situation.

Schwartz offers readers a curious ethnographic memoir of Haiti and in particular his days doing dissertation research in the community of Jean Rabel. The book has a peculiar tone, partly because of Schwartz’s candor regarding his romantic entanglements during fieldwork, and partly because of the vitriol with which he condemns the practice of monetized food aid. He argues that monetized food aid is the means by which mid-sized NGOs (in this case, CARE and Save the Children) supplement their overhead, as they sell off mass quantities of rice, beans, and other foodstuffs supplied by USAID. Schwartz clearly has intimate knowledge of the gaps and pitfalls inherent in this system, namely the extent of corruption in the food distribution process and the more systemic problems caused by flooding local markets with foreign (specifically American) produce. But as the book progresses, one wonders whether Schwartz’s outrage also comes from the fact that he was denied a key position among the very organizations he criticizes.

Travesty in Haiti includes a robust appendix populated with detailed charts and graphs to illustrate the economic effects of monetized food aid – i.e., fluctuations in commodity prices arranged by growing seasons – as well as a set of post-earthquake policy suggestions, which bring this second edition up to date. One wishes Schwartz had taken the time to engage other social science

writers, and if readers can excuse the occasional Wikipedia citation (pp. 113, xi, xlii), it's a decent read. A word of caution, though, on his methods: Schwartz occupies the branch of anthropology more concerned with numbers and statistics than qualitative methods, so readers hoping for a Haitian worldview on religious *pwen* (see Richman 2008) or Haitian concepts of illness (see Minn 2006) will be unsatisfied. For a thorough, albeit sensational, breakdown of Haiti's non-profit Leviathan, however, *Travesty in Haiti* is vital.

Terry Buss presents a different perspective of failure in Haiti. Centering his study on the simple question of why aid to Haiti has failed, he first suggests that the model adopted for Haiti was an appropriate one for Latin America, when what Haiti really needs is a "fragile, postconflict, sub-Saharan African model" (p. 6). That Buss devotes the rest of the book to a list of "drivers of failure" (p. 9) makes this one of the most positivistic looks at Haiti in decades. Buss's logic is deceptively simple, and one wonders how different it would be had he invested more than a short "fact-finding tour" (p. 9) in the country. To be fair, one of the book's greatest strengths is its immense digest of IMF, World Bank, USAID, and UN reports, almost to the extent that it excludes anything published outside the dismal science. Like Schwartz's book, this is a go-to source for questions involving facts and figures.

According to Buss's analysis, the mother source of Haiti's failure is the government itself. "Haiti," he says (p. 9), "has always been poorly governed and its people exploited by political rulers and elites." Never mind that this claim is a gross homogenization of Haitian history. It is also a blinkered view of the story, one that favors the predatory state. Buss does include discussion of foreign powers, but only insofar as they practically articulate with the Haitian government; there is no analysis of U.S., Canadian, or French interests which are, of course, also implicated in aid failure. For instance, Buss tells us that aid failure is partially the result of "conditionality" (pp. 106-7) – meaning a carrot-and-stick routine in which aid is given only if certain policy criteria are met – but he does not extend his critical look to the history of why these relationships, such as race relations or neo-liberal exploitation exist in the first place. He argues that foreign powers play a superficial role in Haiti's failure, while the real culprit is the Haitian government itself.

A book about the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) would seem only natural in this context of failure. MINUSTAH is often criticized as a homogenous military force responsible for more harm than good, but Chilean General Eduardo Aldunate, who served as the mission's Deputy and Chief Force Commander from 2005 to 2006, sheds important light on this misunderstood institution. Aldunate argues that MINUSTAH's bad rap unfairly stems from the "citesoleilization" (pp. 109-11) of Haiti, as if the entire country were as dysfunctional as the eponymous slums of Port-au-Prince. His breakdown of the mission's political structure, including operations protocol (pp. 22-27), troop deployments,

rotations, and furloughs (pp. 46-49), and the work that goes into accommodating MINUSTAH's international mosaic, is alone instructive. The book's most important contribution, however, is its discussion of the uneasy alliance that exists between MINUSTAH's military and law enforcement divisions. Aldunate explains how the mission is subject to a crippling bureaucratic chain of command involving as many as four parallel authorities (pp. 71-76). Readers are told that it is the soldiers who are the good guys, organizing free clinics, mechanical courses, and public works out of their own pockets (p. 116), while the police officers (UNPol) are the saboteurs. On several occasions, Aldunate claims, when peacekeepers and UNPol had agreed to run joint operations, the UNPol would simply fail to show up (p. 69). It is in this context that we need to view MINUSTAH's "failure."

Haiti's relationship with the United Nations dates back to 1947, when the country was selected as the first beneficiary of a UN technical assistance mission, and it has grown especially in the past two decades. Yet surprisingly little has been written to detail this relationship or examine life in an occupied Haiti. Being the first intimate look at MINUSTAH's internal machinations as well as the first to put a human face to the institution makes Aldunate's book important. Indeed, we must thank Aldunate for reminding us that MINUSTAH, like any institution, is full of human actors, and not the evil machine for which it has become known.

But important faults prevent *Backpacks Full of Hope* from being as pioneering as it could be. Aldunate overwhelmingly favors Latin American contributions to MINUSTAH, particularly those of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, and the book could be seen as a publicity piece for these "emerging nations." When the mission began in 2004, and the United Nations authorized 7,200 troops, 1,897 police, 449 advisers, 526 local civilians, and a \$500 million budget, nearly half this quota was met by Latin American nations (p. 67). Aldunate is also in the habit of thinking like an old soldier, and is not bothered with Haiti's problems as they exist beyond the mission's parameters, nor indeed as anything other than an internal security issue. Perhaps this fact explains Aldunate's reluctance to criticize his comrades and his relative silence on the criminal accusations made against UN soldiers – specifically the Brazilian contingents who were accused of rape and murder – around the time he was in command.

If Fatton's warning is correct that Haiti is headed back to the future, and if this future should be characterized by the level of failure seen in these recent titles, then it is a bleak future indeed. Two things may be said of this current trend in Haitian Studies. First, we take for granted the everyday successes in Haiti. Schwartz, Buss, and Aldunate do very little to put forth an alternative to failure. Is the opposite of failure success? If so, what would a success in Haiti look like? Would it be a chicken in every pot, or something else? (Historically speaking, what was originally considered a great success

– USAID’s campaign to eliminate swine flu by replacing every “creole pig” with a less hardy North American breed in 1982 – was in reality a disaster for Haitian families.) Failure, then, is the unmarked, default form.

Second, neither failure nor success is defined by these books in culturally relevant ways. Unfortunately, what is now a classic anthropological critique of development – that it is goal-oriented instead of being process-oriented – still holds true. Where Westerners see failure, many Haitians may see success – take, for instance, the *taptap* buses that play crucial roles in provisioning Haitian markets, or the youth groups who collectively repair streets and public spaces. Woodson (2010:284) summarizes this best in his contention that the majority of Haitians (peasants, artisans, and unskilled urban laborers) have been coping with the insouciant choices of *les responsables irresponsables* of political society by improvising ways to *chache lavi* (make a living or a life). One is reminded of what Cuban writer Antonio Benítez-Rojo (1996:10) said to discredit the Western idea of the Caribbean as an apocalyptic world:

In Chicago a beaten soul says: “I can’t take it any more,” and gives himself up to drugs or to the most desperate violence. In Havana [or in Haiti, one might argue], he would say: “The thing to do is not die,” or perhaps: “Here I am, fucked but happy.”

This is not to say that Haitians are happy natives content with poverty, injustice, and the like. Rather, it is a reminder that the concepts of success and failure operate in culturally specific ways in Haiti, and that we should adjust our expectations to match those of the people to whom success and failure matter most.

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BOOK REVIEWS

A World Among These Islands: Essays on Literature, Race, and National Identity in Antillean America. ROBERTO MÁRQUEZ. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010. x + 264 pp. (Paper US\$ 26.95)

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In one of his first published poems, Derek Walcott wrote with a touch of pastoral irony about an impossible love: “You in the castle of your skin, I the swineherd” (2002-3). George Lamming appropriated the phrase and changed the pronoun to give the title of his searing first novel. Now, sixty years later, Roberto Márquez has borrowed another equally resonant phrase from a different part of Walcott’s poem for the title of his collection of essays. As the epigraph to the first part of the collection has it:

I know from here that I and distant others
Alien only by twang and dialect have unity / ... /
I praise those who see a world among these islands. (p. 11)

“Seeing the Caribbean Whole” is the title Márquez gives to this first part, and no literary and cultural critic has done more in recent years to try to keep that wholeness in some kind of focus without losing sight of the detail of its constituent parts. His work has the range of such illustrious predecessors as Adolphe Roberts, Gordon Lewis, and Édouard Glissant, though the most appropriate comparison would perhaps be with his near-contemporary, Silvio Torres-Saillant, whose classic text, *Caribbean Poetics*, recently appeared in a revised edition.

A World among These Islands consists of essays written between 1975 and 2002. Perhaps sensibly, no attempt has been made to “update” them, so maintaining a sense of chronology is occasionally a challenge, but by no means an insuperable one. The essays are grouped into three sections: four appear under “Seeing the Caribbean Whole,” three focus on matters Puerto

Rican (“Notes of a ’Nother Rican”), and the remaining six, as the section title, “Occasions, Views, and Reviews,” suggests, are more heterogeneous. Seeing the book whole, the essays are united by Márquez’s formidably archipelagic knowledge of the region and by his elegantly sumptuous prose, whose long sentences break onto the reader’s inner ear with the rhythm of waves meeting the beach in the Bahía de Rincón. One example will stand for the whole:

A promontory of Asia, long subject to Asian depredations, and comparatively undeveloped tributary of that more sumptuous and self-sufficient scimitar of territory extending south beyond the Strait of Gibraltar and eastward through Alexandria, Arabia, Persia, India, and China, Europe first created a cohesive consciousness of itself as a defensive, aggressively oppositional negation of the more advanced and sophisticated civilizations on whose periphery it lay. (p. 28)

One highlight of the book is certainly the 1989 essay, “Nationalism, Nation, and Ideology: Trends in the Emergence of a Caribbean Literature,” which ranges masterfully across the centuries and across the islands, making the kinds of connections and discriminations that both enrich understanding and set the imagination racing: John Jacob Thomas compared with José Martí, Antonio Pedreira with Herbert de Lisser. Another highlight would be “One Boricua’s Baldwin,” a more personal – indeed moving – account of reading James Baldwin from a *boricua* perspective, an essay which contains both a poignant recollection of the impact of *Notes of a Native Son* on Spanish Harlem in 1959 and a careful analysis of what Márquez calls Baldwin’s “amaurotic provincialism” – his unwavering and ultimately debilitating belief in the exceptionality of the experience of blacks in the United States. If these two essays demonstrate Márquez’s strength as a cultural historian, then “The Stoic and Sisyphean: John Hearne and the Angel of History” shows that he has no superior when it comes to close literary analysis: his assessment of Hearne is detailed, sympathetic, historically informed, yet absolutely forensic. His entirely appropriate invocation here of Lampedusa’s *The Leopard* shows that his range of comparison is not limited to the Caribbean.

A World among These Islands is marked by a generosity of spirit, an openness to the myriad riches of the region whose literary output it takes as its subject. Only in the last section do – appropriately – negative notes creep in with a reminder in “Grenada: History, Neocolonialism, and Culture in the Contemporary Caribbean” of the United States’ dismal record of intervention, and in “El Señor Presidente” of the “shopworn and flatulent bromides” that marked the offensive and racist writing of the Dominican Republic’s erstwhile president, Joaquín Balaguer. Despite Márquez’s admirable insistence on unity, the original context of Walcott’s challenging words needs also to be remembered:

I praise those who see a world among these islands
 Where we shall try to live in peace and fail,
 The failure nothing. (Walcott 2002-3:34)

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Caribbean Reasonings: The Thought of New World, The Quest for Decolonisation. BRIAN MEEKS & NORMAN GIRVAN (eds.). Kingston: Ian Randle, 2010. xv + 344 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

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Just over five centuries after Christopher Columbus stumbled upon the region that has come to be known as the Caribbean, the resurgence of Asia amidst the contraction of the North Atlantic world's influence over the global political economy has opened an era of change for the Caribbean societies as they struggle to adapt to the arrival of this "New World." The arrival of the Europeans had resulted in the disappearance and displacement of much of the Native American populations of these territories, and their replacement by "colonies of exploitation" constructed to meet the needs of the European colonial powers that imposed their rule over these territories and brought

populations from Africa and Asia to “develop” them through systems of coercive labor. The Caribbean was transformed into an appendage of the North Atlantic region and the lives of its inhabitants were defined by the politics of displacement, dispossession, and dependence.

This volume of essays explores the origins and evolution of the New World Movement that emerged during the process of decolonization and colonial reform that gained momentum in the 1950s and which resulted in the political independence of British Caribbean territories over the following decades. Essays by Norman Girvan, Kari Levitt, David DeCaires, and James Millette and an interview with Lloyd Best explore the emergence and evolution of a generation of intellectuals affiliated with the University of the West Indies, activists from the wider society, and colleagues in other parts of the Caribbean and North America. The movement sought to develop a vision of a “New World” in the Caribbean nationalist imaginary that focused upon the need for “epistemic sovereignty, a belief in the power of ideas to effect change, and a view of the Caribbean condition as a legacy of the pervasive effects of the plantation system” (Girvan p. 8). It reflected a search for indigenous paradigms that could provide a framework for the analysis of these societies – in effect, allowing the nationalists to see themselves through their own eyes rather than remain dependent upon the paradigms rooted in the colonial experience. The New World Movement was thus both a project of indigenization and an “insistence that the Caribbean should legitimately be at the centre, both as a subject of research in its own right and more widely, as a project for development” (Meeks p. xii).

The movement began to splinter in 1968 after a split between Lloyd Best and James Millette that presaged a growing gulf among members who saw access to power as the way forward, those committed to keeping the movement intellectually oriented toward reframing debates about the region, and others postulating a need for a more radical politics. The split was a reflection of the growing self-confidence among the region’s intellectuals that they represented a successor generation to the nationalist leaders who had led the struggle for decolonization. However, the banning of Walter Rodney from Jamaica in 1968 by the Jamaican government as a result of his political work among disadvantaged communities was a sign that the future would pose severe challenges. The Black Power revolt in Trinidad and Tobago in 1970, following the radicalization of the civil rights movement in the United States, also triggered a backlash against the politics of the streets that Rodney and the Black Power movement had embraced. Thereafter, in the minds of the governments of the region and university administrators the New World Movement was perceived as a source of oppositional politics that should be contained and frustrated. While Guyana under Forbes Burnham and Jamaica under Michael Manley were open to the ideas of the group, they sought to co-opt the movement for their own more limited partisan agendas. At the same

time, the flowering of radical politics in the region, and the conservative backlash that emerged, disrupted the focus upon the indigenization of Caribbean scholarship and political life that the New World Movement had promoted.

The implosion of the group after 1968 opened the space for the polarization of the region's politics and the paralysis of the university over subsequent decades. It was an era from which the region has yet to recover and which facilitated the rise of underground economies built around narcotics trafficking, the increasing corruption of the political systems by the rise of criminal networks linked to the political parties, high levels of skilled migration, and neoliberal policies inspired by American pressures for economic orthodoxy – in effect, a reversal of the culture of sovereignty that New World and the decolonization had promoted. However, as the essays of Kirk Meighoo, Dennis Pantin, Vaughan Lewis, David Wong, Patricia Northover and Michaeline Crichlow, and Paget Henry remind readers, the unfinished business of New World has left open spaces for the continued effort to rethink the workings of Caribbean society and economy – in both policy and scholarly terms.

The search for epistemic sovereignty in the Caribbean needs to continue in an environment that is being reshaped by the resurgence of Asia and the emergence of an Asia-Pacific centered world. That “New World” poses a fundamental challenge for the Caribbean, which has historically been shaped by the Atlantic-dominated international system. The contemporary context will require the systematic evaluation of Caribbean culture and political economy that the New World Movement had initiated and which was interrupted by the entrenchment of cold war conflicts in the region. These essays provide powerful reminders of the challenges that continue to inform Caribbean life and as Lloyd Best, notwithstanding his optimism, recognized: “You can’t build any civilization unless you have elites ... You have to have a group of people in the society who can see very far ahead” (p. 324). The challenge for the universities of the region is to continue the work initiated by the New World Movement – creating serious elites who can see the region through their own eyes.

Elusive Origins: The Enlightenment in the Modern Caribbean Historical Imagination. PAUL B. MILLER. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010. x + 230 pp. (Paper US\$ 21.50)

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In *Elusive Origins*, Paul B. Miller offers an important and thoughtful contribution to ongoing debates about the “Caribbean intervention in and critique of the discourse of the Enlightenment” (p. 13). As part of the impressive New World Studies series by the University of Virginia Press, Miller’s study creates an implicit dialogue with other works in the same series, including Luis Madureira’s *Cannibal Modernities: Post-coloniality and the Avant-garde in Caribbean and Brazilian Literature* (2005), which similarly explores counterdiscourses to modernity.

As Miller outlines, the Enlightenment was founded on a structural relation between the “enlightened” center and peripheral “immaturity” and between leaders and masses. From a “peripheral” perspective, the contradictions of the Enlightenment are clearly visible, as they were produced by the coexistence of the abstract goal of universal human emancipation and the institution of slavery, supported by the concrete language of colonial-racist discourse. Miller approaches this important topic through an admirably comparative, cross-Caribbean examination of literary approaches to the eighteenth century. Dividing the writers into two generations separated by the Cuban Revolution and thus re-inscribing the familiar modern-postmodern divide into regional history, he argues that the first generation of “pioneers” (Alejo Carpentier, C.L.R. James, and Marie Chauvet) formulate a strong critique of the Enlightenment without being able to extricate themselves completely from its logic. Building on their work, the writers of the next “postmodern” generation (Maryse Condé, Reinaldo Arenas, and Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá) call into question that structure itself.

In Part One of the book, Miller analyses the work of the two male “pioneers.” The first and perhaps strongest chapter focuses on Carpentier’s *Ecué-Yamba-O* and *The Kingdom of this World* and functions as a reference point throughout the book. Miller posits that the gap between the Afro-Cuban “insider” and the anthropological “outside” observer felt in the former continues to structure the latter, a novel that wavers between the incommensurability of European “retrospective” and Afro-Cuban “prospective” temporalities

and a point of symbiosis. His sustained focus on music as a motif central to the novel's critical engagement with the Enlightenment legacy adds valuable new insights to current research on an already well-studied text. An engagement with *Cannibal Modernities* might have been useful, given that it covers similar ground but arrives at a remarkably different understanding of the ending of *The Kingdom of this World* by reading it alongside G.W.F. Hegel's theories on history. In contrast to Miller, who sees Ti Noel's disappearance in a storm as a "regression" after a prior moment of dialectical transcendence, Madureira (2005:183) reads it as the assumption of the Caribbean into world history "whose absolute end is Africa" and thus as offering a radical reinterpretation of the slaves' association with Nature that is able to transcend the binaries structuring the Enlightenment.

The second chapter discusses the problematic nature of C.L.R. James's representation of the relation between the "ignorant masses" and Toussaint Louverture. As Miller argues, the shortcomings of *The Black Jacobins* stem from employing the framework of Greek tragedy to explain Toussaint Louverture's "flaw": James reduces the masses to the role of the "chorus" and implicitly represents the cultural tradition of the "center" as "universal." James's portrayal ultimately remains entangled within the contradictions inherent in the European Enlightenment. With regards to the function of this chapter in Miller's book, one might note that while the inclusion of *Black Jacobins* provides an interesting contrast to Carpentier's novel, it also seems to impose certain limitations on a study that focuses almost exclusively on novels, since it arguably weakens its attention to the novel *as form* and its specific relation to modernity, something that could have been further explored in the book.

In Part Two, Miller moves on to discuss literary texts by Marie Chauvet and Maryse Condé, both of whom add a gendered perspective to this tradition. Miller proceeds to illustrate a generational divide between them: while Chauvet in *Dance on the Volcano* prepares the ground for the disruption of macro-narratives, the postmodern Condé mocks notions of authenticity, parodies the Caribbean tradition of historical fiction, and displays a fundamental distrust toward Enlightenment concepts such as progress. In his analysis of Chauvet's novel, Miller brings out the contradictions of the protagonist's attitude toward French civilization (which she aspires to), the institution of slavery (which she despises), and the slaves (for whom she feels "compassion"). While Afro-Caribbean cultural productions are referred to pejoratively in Chauvet's novel, the ideas and know-how of the seventeenth-century protagonist of Condé's *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* may be read as an Afro-Caribbean, spiritual "Enlightenment" that precedes that of Europe, as Miller argues.

Part Three focuses on the radicalization of this skepticism toward historical representation in novels by Arenas and Rodríguez Juliá. Adding to the available research on Arena's reworking of Carpentier's legacy, Miller

argues that while both take the Cartesian cogito as a starting point, Carpentier arrives at an assertion of authorial sovereignty whereas Arenas arrives at radical doubt as the cogito for him does not ground but rather limits representation. Creating places and events in his novels that never existed in Puerto Rico, Rodríguez Juliá breaks out of this dialogue with Carpentier, creating a “negatively dialectic space unrestrained by the limitations of either cogito or *Aufklärung*” (p. 174).

One of the many achievements of *Elusive Origins* is to provide critical visibility to writers such as Chauvet and Rodríguez Juliá, who have not been given much international exposure. Miller’s crosslinguistic and pan-Caribbean study provides an important contribution to available scholarship and challenges the fragmentation of the region often replicated in academia.

Caribbean Perspectives on Modernity: Returning Medusa’s Gaze. MARIA CRISTINA FUMAGALLI. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009. x + 198 pp. (Paper US\$ 22.50)

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In Chapter 6 of *Caribbean Perspectives on Modernity*, Maria Cristina Fumagalli quotes from Derek Walcott’s epic poem *Omeros*, in which the figure of Homer instructs the poet to “Forget the gods ... and read the rest” (Walcott 1990:283). The reference is apt, for this is also what Fumagalli undertakes in her study: a comprehensive consideration of “the rest” which has been located and perpetuated, in its supposed backwardness, on the periphery of what she terms the North Atlantic modernity project – early modernity’s “way of thinking and framing the world” (p. 136). What is needed, she argues, is an entire reconceptualization of the way we understand that period – particularly the era from the sixteenth century onward – based on evidence of interaction and negotiation, permeability and mutual affect between the North Atlantic modernity project and its historically peripheral spaces.

In order to access an impressively diverse array of texts – extraordinary in its scope and genre, spanning several centuries and including paintings, poems, archetypes, fairy tales, engravings, and novels – Fumagalli uses the

myth of Medusa as allegorical conduit. The trope of Medusa and her petrifying (though ultimately vulnerable) gaze is “expedient for describing how modernity creates its ‘others’: in order to legitimize itself, it petrifies those who stand before it, freezing them into a state of ... non-modernity” (p. 1). Building on the contributions of C.L.R. James, Paul Gilroy, and others, and interrogating an oft-overlooked temporal moment in Caribbean Studies, Fumagalli locates instances of powerful hybridity and resistance to overarching narratives of oppression and abjection from within North Atlantic modernity and the Caribbean region.

The sheer scope of the project would seem unwieldy, yet Fumagalli manages it with clarity. Each chapter unfolds from a central image or story, and this structure becomes her own transcultural strategy towards an interrelationality of the Caribbean: to interrogate Guadeloupean Maryse Condé’s novel alongside the sacrifice ritual of a Cuban slave festival, or the Anglo-Guyanese poet Grace Nichols vis-à-vis a seventeenth-century engraving by Flemish artist Jan van der Straet (known to the world as Stradanus). Indeed, this is one of the central strengths of the study. Moving back and forth across history and intertext, Fumagalli is never satisfied with a singular story. Rather, she seeks the origins for that story in myriad other narratives. Her commitment to exhaustive archival research creates an exhilarating (though occasionally dizzying) history of mutual entanglement. For instance, John Dryden’s seventeenth-century translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* echoes through Canadian-Tobagonian poet Marlene NourbeSe Philip’s poem, though Ovid himself was influenced by Homer’s “Hymn to Demeter.” Behind every Persephone, Fumagalli reminds us, is an Osiris.

Caribbean Perspectives on Modernity begins with what Fumagalli calls “the point of entanglement par excellence, the encounter between the Old and the New Worlds” (p. 11). She draws upon Grace Nichols’s female subjectivities in the collections *i is a long memoried woman* (1983) and *The Fat Black Woman’s Poems* (1985) to analyze varying interpretations of a 1683 early modern engraving by Stradanus depicting America’s encounter with Amerigo Vespucci. She pushes beyond conventional readings of the image as reflecting mere abjection and eroticism and proposes instead that we see America, with hand outstretched towards Amerigo, as an empowered female body. Informed by extensive research, she offers alternative and nuanced approaches to the image while interrogating the discourses of primitivism that have historically been yoked with America and the New World.

Elsewhere in her study, mythology is employed as an interpretative strategy. Fumagalli notably asserts that in “reiterating the simultaneity of the New World with the Old,” myth “explodes the notion of progress, one of the central tenets of North Atlantic modernity” (p. 74). The myth of Proserpina/Persephone becomes a useful lens through which to analyze Marlene NourbeSe Philip’s collection *She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks*

(1988) alongside a 1972 short story by Gabriel García Márquez. Both texts use the narrative of Proserpina's rape as metaphor for figurations of exploitation – the sexual, socio-cultural, economic or otherwise linguistic oppression Fumagalli cites as indicative of North Atlantic modernity's petrification of the Caribbean – while nonetheless gesturing toward spaces of emancipation and self-actualization.

Other chapters in *Caribbean Perspectives on Modernity* examine literary genre. Fumagalli innovatively pairs the seventeenth-century early modern writer Lady Mary Wroth and her novel *The Countesse of Montgomerie Urania* (1621) with contemporary Jamaican sociologist and poet Erna Brodber's *Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home* (1980) to demonstrate how both are invested in "alterations of romance templates" (p. 96). A consideration of the science fiction novel *The Purple Cloud* (1902) by overlooked West Indian author M.P. Shiel complicates racial discourse and performance in the Caribbean and London in the early twentieth century. The most poignant chapter of the study is the final one, which traces the influence of sixteenth- and eighteenth-century Venetian painters on Derek Walcott's poem *Tiepolo's Hound* (2001). The poem takes as its inspiration the subordinated figure of the dog from Veronese's painting *Feast in the House of Levi* (1573). From there, Fumagalli follows the figure of the painter Camille Pissarro (a central muse in the Walcott poem) who, before being appropriated by the French as theirs, and before influencing countless pillars of Impressionism and Post-Impression – among these, Cézanne, Gauguin, Manet, Van Gogh, and Seurat – belonged to the Caribbean. Born of a Creole mother and raised in what was then the Danish Antilles, Pissarro attributed his sense of artistry to those seemingly marginal beginnings. Pissarro is a crossover figure, like so many of the authors, artists, poets, and thinkers Fumagalli reclaims in this study. Her work demands that we reconsider Medusa's pervasive, debilitating, and fallible gaze, and with it, homogeneous definitions of center and periphery in the early modern era.

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Who Abolished Slavery: Slave Revolts and Abolitionism: A Debate with João Pedro Marques. SEYMOUR DRESCHER & PIETER C. EMMER (eds.). New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. viii + 208 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.95)

Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic. DEREK R. PETERSON (ed.). Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010. ix + 235 pp. (Paper US\$ 28.95)

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Although decisively ranged against postcolonialist historiography, the two books in this review truly reflect the rich diversity in the scholarship of revisionism, reaction, and reconciliation that continues to draw sustenance from the momentous conjuncture of bicentennial commemorations between 2003 and 2008: the Haitian Revolution and Danish, American, and British abolitions. Launched in earnest in the 1970s, the debate on antislavery and slave-trade abolition intensified with the commemoration of epochal milestones in enslaved Africans' struggle for freedom in the Caribbean, beginning with the hundred fiftieth anniversary of Britain's Emancipation Act and its fortuitous combination with the fiftieth anniversary of Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery* in 1984; the hundred fiftieth anniversary of the actual end of British slavery (1988); and the bicentennial of the launch of the Haitian Revolution (1991). These commemorations resuscitated a moribund moralist historiography paralleled by an increasingly strident call for reparations supported by historians of subaltern agency.

Who Abolished Slavery? is divided into three sections. The first is Richard Wall's translation of Marques's extended essay, "Slave Revolts and the Abolition of Slavery: An Oversimplification." The second comprises short commentaries by seminal scholars of Atlantic slavery and abolitionism, namely John Thornton, Pieter C. Emmer, David Geggus, Seymour Drescher, Peter Blanchard, David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman jointly, David Brion Davis, Olivier Pétrié-Grenouilleau, Robin Blackburn, and Hilary Beckles. The final section is Marques's clinical rebuttal. Beckles's terse response is symptomatic of a potential Caribbean reaction to Marques's most provocative contentions. Nevertheless, the book successfully presents a valid landscape of the historiography of abolitionism and the beginnings of British imperialism in Africa.

Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic comprises an extended introduction by Derek Peterson and seven essays by John Thornton, Boyd Hilton, Christopher Leslie Brown, Philip D. Morgan, Seymour Drescher, Robin Law, and Jonathon Glassman. The co-opting of Thornton and Drescher, two of the most eminent scholars in Atlantic history, helps to cement the links between the two volumes. In light of the explicitly stated objective by the series editors to highlight the University of Cambridge's "young promising African scholars," in addition to featuring the work of "European or American Africanists," one is left to wonder why not a single African scholar was among the volume's contributors.

Collectively the two volumes engage three of the most controversial themes in Atlantic history: responsibility for the horrors of the Atlantic slave trade and the slavery system it sustained, credit for the abolition of both evils, and the nexus between abolitionism and colonialism in Africa. Both books also give friendly testimony for the defense of moral imperium, while patently delegitimizing the case for reparations. Both ostensibly subscribe to the project outlined by Marques: the recovery of moral ground lost to subaltern agency since *Capitalism and Slavery*.

With a deep understanding of the imperialism of language, Jean-Paul Sartre (1963:7) contended that "Not so long ago," one quarter of the world's population "had the Word; the others had the use of it." In the half-century following the publication of *Capitalism and Slavery* economic historians and their allies of subaltern agency successfully demolished this imperialist paradigm. The tables are again turning in a neo-imperialist assault on the Word. A positive trend in the methodology of "the new Atlantic history" is the comparative of integration" (Brown, p. 84) to which both volumes under review certainly subscribe. However, a disturbing trend embedded subliminally in both works is the inclination to subvert established definitions of pivotal concepts in the narrative of slavery and freedom. The new definitions are dogmatic, disdain "conceptual sophistication" (Beckles, p. 179), and may even glorify "vagueness" (Blackburn, p. 174). For example, Pétrié-Grenouilleau unrealistically conceptualizes abolition as "the will to put an end to slavery as a system, wherever it may exist" and wrongly claims this objective for British abolitionists during the eighteenth century (p. 161). Likewise, Emmer impugns maroons for having "no objection to slavery" but offers only circumstantial evidence from the terms of treaties composed entirely by the whites (p. 105). Blackburn quite correctly links these and similar semantics to a compulsion for portraying abolitionism as "a white phenomenon" (p. 169). The brevity of Beckles's contribution as well as his position as last commentator and flag-bearer of anti-colonialist historiography underscore the editors' triumphal reclamation of the Word. In confirming their personal orientation in the debate, Emmer and Drescher leave no room for compromise: "We now know that African, not European, slave traders dominated

the supply of slaves in Africa and that the staggeringly high mortality during the voyage was mainly related to the physical condition in which the slaves embarked" (p. vi). The only case study in support of this claim is presented by Thornton in Peterson's volume, thus underscoring the fragile borders in the two volumes.

Despite hard-hitting criticisms that expose serious flaws in Marques's essay, many contributors to the debate endorse his contentious claim that enslaved Africans "rarely objected to the practice of slavery" and certainly never contemplated ending "the system"; that rather, they were only "against the position they occupied within that system"; and that they had no direct impact on statutory abolition (pp. 14-15). Even so, a satisfying element in *Who Abolished Slavery?* is the demonstration of independent scholarship whenever Marques's conclusions clash with debaters' signature ideas. For example, Drescher extols Marques's "new master narrative" as "logically and empirically argued," except in trumpeting the subaltern view that the Haitian Revolution "had a positive impact in the acceleration of the abolition of the slave trade" (pp. 121-22). For Marques's subversive crossing of the floor, Drescher summarily rejects his claim as "an overstatement" and presents his own case for excising the "fear factor" from every aspect of abolitionism. Interestingly, Davis throws his immense scholarly weight unreservedly on Marques's side of the debate, declaring almost regally that without the "antislavery ideas" of Europeans "there would have been no end to the New World slave systems in the nineteenth century" (p. 167). Although Eltis and Engerman admit that shipboard revolts would not have led directly to abolition of the trade, they express cautious confidence that shipboard resistance had "a major effect on the timing of abolition of the slave trade" as well as the timing of emancipation in the British Caribbean (p. 152).

Peterson's wide-ranging introduction in *Abolitionism and Imperialism* delves into his own specialized research. Although thought provoking, it is at times conceptually problematic. Perception is epistemological; when subject to academic research, it requires a proper interrogation of mentalities within their own historical and sociological frameworks. The conclusion that it was simply "good politics" for detainees of prison camps and other anticolonial activists in East Africa to accuse the British of enslaving them (p. 2) might be more revealing of the historian's bias than the perceived status of oppressed activists. A similarly problematic rationale emerges in Hilton's demeaning the struggle for freedom by enslaved Africans as merely "ventriloquizing abolitionists' voices" (p. 24) and engaging in ideological piracy, a charge also leveled against English working-class activists in their fight against inhumane industrial exploitation (pp. 15, 18).

Hilton gives an interesting review of the first and second centenaries of abolition of the British Atlantic slave trade – from the low-keyed remembrance and political blasphemy of William Wilberforce in 1907 to the

megalomaniac hype of 2007 to restore Wilberforce's sainthood and wash away Britain's national guilt for her "Atlantic triangle." Britain's neatly laid bicentennial commemorative plans for "prettifying" the slave trade were passionately shattered by advocates of subaltern agency. However, Hilton unexpectedly condemns the "descendants of the slave-owning race" for daring to share the "jaundiced view" of "descendants of the victims of slavery" (p. 64).

In refreshingly informative essays, Thornton, Drescher, Brown, and Law all address Britain's rationale for intervention in Africa from its creeping phase to the eve of the scramble for colonies. Thornton's engagement with the Kingdom of Kongo is particularly significant because of the relatively early period of the Portuguese slave trade and the extensive documents generated by contemporary Kongoese scribes. Nevertheless, one should not forget that the Atlantic slave trade was already seventy years old; Thornton treats with Dahomey after two hundred years of Portuguese and other European slave-trading in the Atlantic. His findings call to mind C.L.R. James's caution to guard against the tendency to personify "the social forces of history." Although the Portuguese had long changed their strategy from direct raiding to trading, amoral capitalism and Europe's insatiable demands for African labor had created "an intolerable pressure on the African peoples, which became fiercer through the centuries as the demands of industry increased and the methods of coercion were perfected" (James 1963:7).

Like Thornton, Brown explores new vistas in Britain's incipient projects in Africa. He contends that the early dreams of agricultural settlements in Africa "contributed one major impulse leading to British abolitionism" (p. 95), thus rejecting the traditional scholarship that claims British anti-slavery sentiment was the major stimulus for colonial experiments in Africa in the immediate aftermath of the Seven Years War. Law wrestles with the ethics of international law in Britain's suppression campaign in Africa, which became the ultimate pretext for violating the sovereignty of African polities. The issues raised resonate in today's continuing assumption of Western powers as superior moralists with the right of military options to change regimes that do not serve their strategic and economic interests.

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The Mediterranean Apprenticeship of British Slavery. GUSTAV UNGERER. Madrid: Editorial Verbum, 2008. 148 pp. (Paper US\$ 17.93)

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Over the past forty years, the history of black people in Britain has been transformed. In the early 1970s it seemed a marginal matter: an interesting but largely insignificant story which threw occasional shafts of light on the broader experience of Africans in other corners of the enslaved Atlantic. In large part this was because we simply did not know very much about it. When in the early 1970s I began my own work in the field, it was like setting out on a journey with no map. There were very few markers or signposts to the way forward: very few written guides and little in the way of obvious areas to be researched. But an initial trawl through county and parochial archives yielded a host of fragments (the occasional mention in parish registers, headstone inscriptions, and the like). And a closer investigation of the *legal* arguments about slavery began to yield more substantive and more varied sources and problems. Since then, a host of scholars have fleshed out a remarkable range of evidence available to scholars, and have, in the process, established a lively setting for historical and social argument (notably on the question of the legality of slavery). Yet there remain distinct areas of confusion and uncertainty.

Most significant perhaps is the question of the *origins* of this black presence, and especially the origins of black slavery in England. It seems clear enough that enslaved Africans were initially brought to England (and Scotland) by early merchant adventurers. Most conventional accounts tend to focus on the African and American voyages of Elizabethan voyagers and explorers, and some have personified the narrative through the life of Sir John Hawkins. But this is to locate the start of the story essentially in the early days of trans-Atlantic trade and exploration. What about that earlier period – the years *before* the English launched themselves across the Atlantic, and concentrated their southern seaborne trade with the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean? It is clear enough that Africans from sub-Saharan Africa had for centuries found their way to Europe, often via the overland-trade routes of the Sahara. Many of course had been bought and sold at various Mediterranean ports (and thence north) as slaves.

This is the area that Gustav Ungerer has pursued in what were, initially, his literary researches. In working on Anglo-Spanish materials he realized

that scholars needed to rethink the broader question of the origins of British slavery. In the process, he has trawled through a range of Spanish archives, and the outcome is this small but important volume which presents us with a discerning commentary from the author, alongside some of the materials he has unearthed in the archives.

It is a book that contains some wonderful nuggets of historical evidence outlining the ease with which British merchants followed their Iberian and Mediterranean partners in trading in Africans. There was money to be made from the bartering and exchanging of Africans for goods and money, and the British seemed to have had few moral or religious qualms about trading with other Europeans for African slaves. It was, of course, all very small scale and individual. But it established a commercial pattern, in the Mediterranean and in the Iberian Peninsula, which was to have enormous consequences following the development of the Americas and the discovery of precious metals, and later the development of sugar plantations.

If we stand back from the revealing details outlined by Ungerer, it is clear that there is an important broader issue at play here, namely the apparent ease with which British (initially English) traders and statesmen were seduced into trading for African humanity. It seemed, at first, a small almost insignificant matter. In time however, with the European encroachments into the Americas, it became an apparently unstoppable force which transformed the face of three continents.

Children in Slavery through the Ages. GWYN CAMPBELL, SUZANNE MIERS & JOSEPH C. MILLER (eds.). Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009. vi + 234 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95)

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Ten years ago, there were few historical monographs on children in slavery. This book, which the editors promise is the first of two on the same theme, inaugurates more than one shift. It begins to reflect on the specificities of “childhood” in the context of trade. And it adopts a global vision in attempting to define “slavery,” the only framework adequate to understanding lives

plucked out of context, lived across many different cultural and geographical borders, and glimpsed only in the records of their masters and owners. It pools together the linguistic and archival skills of a range of regional specialists in an excavation that stretches across nine centuries and a corresponding geographical spread. These features make the volume simultaneously a useful teaching tool for undergraduate courses on world and comparative slavery and a significant guide to future research.

The essays are organized in three somewhat conventional clusters. The first is devoted to trades. Antonio Mendes offers a glimpse of the Portuguese-controlled trade in about 300-350,000 Muslims from northern and western Africa supplied to owners in the Iberian Peninsula and from there shipped to societies from the Rio Grande to Patagonia between the end of the thirteenth to the seventeenth century. The Portuguese traded slaves against carpets and rugs, textiles and stirrups; Arabs and Berber intermediaries supplied African slaves to Portuguese merchants. Although precise ages could not be established, babes at the breast, pubescent youth, and adult women constituted more than 70 percent of those imported in the sixteenth century. Richard Allen begins with the Portuguese trade in the Indian Ocean from the end of the fifteenth century and includes the Dutch, French, and eventually British traders across various depots (e.g., Mauritius, Seychelles) of the Indian Ocean by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Once more, Arab Muslims and Indian merchants participate in a criss-crossing series of trade-connections. Fred Morton provides vivid biographies of children culled from the Church Missionary Society's records of the nineteenth-century East African slaves. George M. La Rue uses the description of the purchase of a single orphan called Ali to expand upon the Egyptian trade in slaves from Sudan prior to 1835. Susan E. O'Donovan traces the children among the four million slaves traded in antebellum North America.

A second set of essays is devoted to the occupational niches filled by slaves who began young and grew into skilled artists, generals, literati bureaucrats, and ordinary domestic servants all over the Asian land mass from the eighth to the early twentieth century. Kristina Richardson studies singing girls (*qiyan*) brought from Ethiopian and Indian societies and trained as performers in 'Abbasid (eighth- to thirteenth-century) society. Like powerful eunuchs studied for the Qing by Bok-Rae Qim, these skilled performers traveled between the secluded women's world and the world of male belletrists – and were simultaneously admired and suspected by the inhabitants of both. Gulay Yilmaz retraces the intricate social and political links developed between military administrators (*devsirme*) and ruling Ottoman Sultans between the fifteenth and twentieth century.

The third and final cluster of essays returns to the well-documented commercial slave-deployments of the Atlantic world from the late eighteenth century, but this time tracing records that bear the imprint of buyers' anxiet-

ies and regrets. Thus Pierre H. Boule traces anxieties regarding the descent of slave-children in late eighteenth-century France, Kenneth Morgan studies infant mortality among slaves in the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British Caribbean and Calvin Schermerhorn recovers the story of slave orphans in the Chesapeake Bay.

Cumulatively, these essays throw up larger questions for the social histories of childhood. It appears from this volume that childhood, like beauty, lay in the eyes of the beholder. Many of the chapters suggest that Europeans studied childhood as a temporal order that ended with the physical appearance of secondary sexual characteristics such as facial hair and breasts. Were there plural cultural, social, or work-based criteria among non-European social groups that qualified those sold not as children but as young adults? Is it possible to compare “slave” and “non-slave” children in the same social group in one period? Such comparisons might sharpen the picture of what a childhood in slavery might have meant to the non-slave child in the same society. Did the latter kind of child in an ‘Abbasid or Ottoman regime aspire to the life of the *qayan* or *devsirme*?

Obviously, each essay contains references to other themes. Those on trade touch on occupations and services of those traded, and on issues of mortality and health not otherwise studied. Mendes points out that many of the African women and children worked as washerwomen, porters, or street vendors everywhere in the city of Lisbon. Allen touches on survival statistics in eighteenth-century Mauritius. I wish that each author had highlighted the places in their own essay where their findings explicitly engaged others in the volume.

Finally, as Allen points out, the Indian Ocean trades, along with those across the Sahara, were of far greater antiquity than those across the Atlantic, and the total number of African slaves transported across the Indian Ocean and Sahara probably exceeded that carried across the Atlantic during the last fourteen hundred years (pp. 36-37). Therefore a chronological arrangement might have enabled the undergraduate readers (to whom I recommend this book) to grasp the continuities and changes in both hemispheres as commercial competition picked up in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Atlantic world. The questions might then be reversed: if the Portuguese were only following upon the ‘Abbasid, why didn’t they develop *qayan* and *devsirme* institutions? Why did the Atlantic societies have so little room for specialized deployment for such slaves? Was it because Europeans lacked the resources to invest in “skilling” slaves? Was the brutalization of slave-imports a reflection of the poverty of their buyers, and less the poverty of their sellers as has long been presumed?

Such questions are no longer asked by jaded scholars alone. American undergraduates who enroll in my course on South Asian slavery during the same years as covered by this volume often ask me this question: if the older systems of slave use did not disappear entirely in the face of Atlantic trades,

how were they affected by them? I answer that as long as historians remain divided by oceans, archives, nationalistic blinkers, and ideologies of various sorts, we will not be able to answer that question conclusively. This volume is especially welcome as a sign that the old divisions might indeed be given up. It is in this vein that I would urge that in the future volumes, scholars engage non-Western historiographies more directly. I especially recommend such engagement to the talented scholars studying Asian societies in this volume. In an ideal world, scholars of 'Abbasid singing girls might then compare them to the singing girls of the Mughal records studied by Katharine Butler Schofield and Ramya Sreenivasan. They might also ask questions such as what such use of singing girls meant for the orthodox ruling on music in the same societies. In an ideal world, the historiography of both slaves and children would become mutually illuminating studies. This volume, a good start in that direction, suggests that my students are likely to get some answers to their questions, even if they are partial ones right now.

The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates. PETER T. LEESON. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009. xvi + 271 pp. (Cloth US\$ 24.95)

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Since Defoe, historians have failed to explain piracy, and more particularly that tsunami of seaborne raiding known as the Golden Age of Piracy that lapped Atlantic shores and more in Defoe's lifetime (c. 1660-1731). French, Dutch, and English patriots blamed the Spanish for hogging the treasure they had stolen from the Indians. (Big deal to steal from them.) More dispassionate analysts spotted hypocrisy among northern European merchant companies, which encouraged and engaged in piracy – only to deny it or call it “privateering” – all to fund slave-based export enclaves in the Luso-Hispanic mold. Apparently inspired by twentieth-century socialism and other failed ideologies, radical historians argued that piracy emerged as an outgrowth of merchant marine solidarity after much rum drinking, sodomizing, and lashing. The pirates of the Golden Age, they said, were a new class of hard-

working if not honest men, accompanied by a few women who shared their taste in clothes. More recent historians, taking a page from the tabloids, have labeled these same pirates terrorists who had to be exterminated like so many vermin, a mission accomplished with steely efficiency by the British Royal Navy. But none of this *explained* piracy.

So, after three centuries of drawing from the same tiny cesspool of evidence, historians could not answer the most basic question: what impulse drove several thousand otherwise reasonable individuals to risk their lives to commit armed robbery at sea in the age of sail and gunpowder? With jaw-dropping simplicity, economist Peter Leeson explains (in his first book!) that the answer has been staring us in the face all along, and it is *greed* – the good kind. The Golden Age pirates, Leeson explains, were not the swaying, sadistic, sex-obsessed drunks they cleverly wanted us to mistake them for, but rather rational, self-interested “economic actors” who knew how to brand products, cut costs, and maximize profits. It followed naturally that they were also team players committed to excellence; knowing that none could go it alone they abandoned their solitary canoes and barbecues and organized themselves into bands, or crews. Once in possession of a vessel, they were ready to swim with the sharks and deal with the devil, all the while adhering, like good, self-interested associates, to the incentive-laced Pirate Code. When the work of pillaging was done, the raiders divided booty among themselves, compensating the injured with an extra slave or sack of coins. The key again? *Incentives*. Forget small fry like Fermat’s Last Theorem; here is a proof for piracy.

How did Leeson do it? In short, by bringing the unquestionable genius of today’s most popular economic theories to bear on the problem. To cut through the thicket of details that has for so long distracted and ultimately frustrated historians, Leeson uses what he calls a filter, which allows him to cut the crap, as it were, and collect only salient facts. With these in hand, Leeson proceeds to sort, distill, and “model” pirate behavior, and here he discovers – to the chagrin of pirate-doubting historians, “haters,” if you will – that it was rational, calculated, sensible, and forward-looking, indeed, way ahead of its time. Stealing other peoples’ things was *good business*, especially when one knew other people who were willing to buy those stolen things, or at least trade sex, alcohol, and firearms for them. And what about the complex “skill sets” needed to run such a risky business? Well, by fortunate coincidence the pirates already knew how to sail ships, which allowed them to efficiently transport treasure before liquidating it and going back for more.

Where Leeson diverges most from the cranky moralists who condemned piracy from the pulpit, as well as from the weepy, rum-soaked Marxists who hailed it as class revenge, is by reminding us that piracy was neither sinful nor romantic. It was simply practical. As any corporate executive or butcher knows, one must use others in order to look out for number one. Why die

swabbing decks when after a quick bit of cost-benefit analysis you could persuade fellow swabs to close ranks, kill the captain, and sail off with everything? Pirates, we now know, saw through the tangle of rules and regulations that jammed the wheels of early modern commerce, and they knew in their hardened hearts that monopolies, governments, the Church, and institutions in general, blocked or rerouted the natural flow of goods (which should have been towards them). Leeson's lessons do not end here: pirate self-interest was – albeit unintentionally – socially progressive. Why were pirates race-blind and democratic? Because it made good business sense. Why discriminate against a black man when he could eviscerate a prisoner as well as any white man? And why discriminate against gays and lesbians if they could lock, load, and stand bold in their breeches? Why, indeed!

In wrapping up, Leeson wisely cautions against drawing anachronistic comparisons between the pirates of the Golden Age and the Somali pirates of today. Why? As Leeson puts it, the Somali pirates are “not as interesting” as their Atlantic predecessors (p. 205). Of course, he's right again. The rag-tag Somalis plaguing the Gulf of Aden today clearly lack the committed work ethic, team spirit, and colorful “brand-name” flags of the Golden Age pirates, plus their dependence on motorboats, mobile phones, and automatic weapons, while arguably rational and self-interested, only make them seem like petty gangsters who barely get their feet wet. Better to stick with the *real pirates* of the seventeenth-century Caribbean, whose actions we can now see were guided not by queen, company, or brotherly love – but by the unseen hook. Let us hope Dr. Leeson applies his economist's scalpel to other historical cadavers.

Theorizing a Colonial Caribbean-Atlantic Imaginary: Sugar and Obeah.
KEITH SANDIFORD. New York: Routledge, 2011. ix + 194 pp. (Cloth US\$ 125.00)

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This book follows Keith Sandiford's *The Cultural Politics of Sugar: Caribbean Slavery and the Narratives of Colonialism* (2000). Although it at times covers some similar ground, it is centered in a rigorous attempt to

understand a “Caribbean-Atlantic imaginary” over a long period of time, from the pre-Columbian era to the ending of slavery. It is truly a challenge to do justice to this rich text in a short review.

Two men with transatlantic histories are key: Richard Ligon (born in England in the mid-1580s) and Matthew “Monk” Lewis (born in Jamaica in 1775). Ligon left England in 1647 because of the upheavals there, and spent about two years in Barbados. Back in England in 1650, he was imprisoned when he wrote *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (which first appeared in 1657). He also drew a detailed map of the island. Matthew Lewis, whose father was born in Jamaica and whose mother also had Jamaican connections, was born and educated in England, where he began a career as a diplomat but ultimately became a writer. He inherited plantations in Jamaica from his father and visited those, already famous for his novel, *The Monk* (1795). Lewis’s *Journal of a West India Proprietor* (1834), contains his long poem, *The Isle of Devils* (originally published in Jamaica in 1827).

Mindful that Ligon and Lewis knew two very different Caribbean territories, Barbados and Jamaica, Sandiford points out that they were both settled first by the same people, who spoke Arawak (p. 6), and both practiced comparable systems of slavery, which saw parallel growth after slaves were transported from Barbados to Jamaica (p. 7). Moreover, certain aspects of the colonial culture that Ligon and Lewis observed at different times and in different places had common imaginary elements, which Sandiford codifies as obeah, sugar, slaves, and the ocean (p. 8).

Sandiford’s convincing definition of a cross-cultural imaginary in his second chapter is of critical importance to his theoretical framework. He solidly grounds his argument by reference to Caribbean writers and scholars such as Édouard Glissant, Kamau Brathwaite, Wilson Harris, Derek Walcott, Sylvia Wynter, Paget Henry, and Paul Gilroy, though he refers to useful European-centered theory (such as Lacan) when necessary. He discovers a series of connected formulas markedly present in Lewis’s work on the planter side (sugar-cure-order, obeah-disease) and for the slaves (obeah-threat-disorder) (p. 29). A “narrative of order and purity” developed around sugar “which served the interests of preserving vertical exclusionary structures predicated on both race and class” (p. 35). Sugar production and export could involve fraud, paralleled on the open sea by the murder of slaves by captains who threw them overboard. But in English cities, sugar was part of a polite and affluent culture in which, as Sandiford says, “the slave presence was wholly invisible yet vitally there” (p. 41).

There follow close readings of Ligon (Chapters 3 and 4), and Lewis (Chapters 5 and 6). Sandiford seeks to define specific forms of the imaginary under discussion, namely “radical,” “social,” and “instituting” (p. 53). The first occurs when people encounter a new environment and must sharply change their idea of the world (as with Ligon’s experience, even before he reached

Barbados). The second is an attempt to impose an order, though often cognizant of resistance to that order. The third arises from those who are subjugated.

In Chapter 4, Sandiford reads Ligon's map along with his *History* to discover hidden resistances within it (the social imaginary). This chapter is particularly fascinating because it explores Ligon's painterly representation of many ideas in his mind about Barbados. His colonial imagination represented, as Sandiford writes, "work, slavery, hunting, seaborne access and food supply," but he demonstrates as well how to read beyond Ligon's explicit intention. He also points out the presence of Amerindians in the margins of Ligon's book about Barbados. Chapter 5 begins with the voyages of Ligon and Lewis across the Atlantic, 164 years apart, but as Sandiford points out, linked by their oceanic experiences. Furthermore, he explores the tropes of sea and sugar, the subtext of Lewis's *Journal* (counterorders) and Lewis's "relations to Amerindian and African epistemes" (p. 100).

Chapter 6 discusses Lewis's *The Isle of Devils*, where the dominant trope is obeah, fascinatingly explored. The Demon-King in Lewis's poem "suggests the possibilities oceanic marronage afforded ... slaves ... in his design to translate private dream into revolutionary social action ... he combines the magic and occult powers of myal and obeah to plot the demise of white plantation power" (p. 132). So a planter with literary gifts and an unusual imagination – both an uneasy tolerance of his own slave-owner role and an opposition to slavery as an idea – exhibits an "Atlantic imaginary" unusually aware of conditions of life for the subordinated in the Caribbean. Sandiford also reminds us of revolutionary politics in both England and the colonies when Lewis was writing his prose and his drama on both sides of the Atlantic, beginning just a few years before the French Revolution, with *Ambrosio, or The Monk* (1796). In a powerful conclusion, he sees Lewis's "instituting" imaginary as prefiguring the apprehension of a Caribbean subconscious in Wilson Harris.

The book does suffer from frequent infelicities of style (a bit of old-fashioned signaling of theory), and an overly heavy hand in laying out arguments, but the high quality of the research, evident in both text and notes, and the importantly provocative, incisive argument make those drawbacks trivial. This book should help us think anew about the way a colonial settler/planter can contribute to a progressive imaginary, once a canny reader like Sandiford finds the subterranean (or suboceanic) text beneath the surface.

Created in the West Indies: Caribbean Perspectives on V.S. Naipaul.
JENNIFER RAHIM & BARBARA LALLA (eds.). Kingston: Ian Randle, 2010.
xxvi+ 234 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

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“We cannot ignore Naipaul,” admits Lawrence Scott, like Naipaul a writer of Trinidadian heritage (p. 180). But the terms of his engagement with Naipaul, embodied as “wrestling” with one of the most controversial writers of our time, characterize the approach of a number of contributors to this volume of essays that emerged from a symposium on Naipaul held in April 2007 at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, and from a lecture series tied to the celebrations of his seventy-fifth birthday. Naipaul has invited extreme reactions, ranging from gushing tributes to his masterly style and craft to outraged denunciations of his perceived admiration for the West alongside his alleged contempt for colonized and postcolonial peoples. Noting that the relationship between the prodigal son and the land of his birth was at best a “love-hate” one, Al Creighton’s report on the seventy-fifth birthday celebrations surmises that “there was a mild suggestion that the only place they [the Naipauls and the West Indian public] were ready to bury the hatchet was in each other’s heads.”¹ While the contributors to this volume show no such violent impulse, it is not quite a conventional *Festschrift* either. The general tone, however, is one of admiration not just for Naipaul’s undeniable talent, but also for what Bhoendradatt Tewarie, the Principal of the St. Augustine campus at the time of the commemorative events, calls the “honest brutality, or if you prefer, brutal honesty” of this Trinidadian *enfant terrible* (p. 196).

To identify Naipaul as simply Trinidadian may be debatable, considering that he sometimes claims (and is claimed by) multiple modernist, postcolonial, and more dubiously postmodernist literary traditions, intellectual genealogies, and spatial geographies, all of which are certainly acknowledged in the volume. But the essays, written by some of the most distinguished scholars from the Caribbean, ultimately embrace this notoriously prickly personality as indeed their own, even if some do so cautiously. Such a gesture is not without irony, revealed in the very choice of the title *Created in the West*

1. Al Creighton, “Return of the Enigma: Naipaul Goes Home for 75th Birthday,” *Stabroek News*, April 9, 2007 <<http://www.landofsixpeoples.com/news/702/ns0704299.html>>.

Indies. As the various essays repeatedly note, the title echoes (but also goes on to dispute or reinterpret) the proclamation that arguably won Naipaul the most opprobrium in the Caribbean: "History was built around achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies" (1996:20).

In her introduction to the volume, Jennifer Rahim disagrees with the charge of "literary treason" (p. x) provoked by such statements. Like Gordon Rohlehr, in his study of the confessional mode in Naipaul, she believes that the puckish humor and performative trickster qualities of the writer, who clearly delights in causing a sensation, are identifiably Trinidadian traits. In the several excellent close readings offered by individual essays, Naipaul's nerves, his sense of violation, his vulnerability to the losses recorded by the history of the region, and his long day's journey into the night of colonialism are generally accepted with more understanding. Speaking of reconciliation and confession, there is some forgiveness for the soreness of scabs reopened and picked upon by Naipaul and, as Rhonda Cobham-Sander concludes, a sense of shared pain and even guilty pleasures. Regardless of the different interpretations of individual works, they share a firm claim over Naipaul's formative years in Trinidad, a source he uncannily returns to over and over again in his writing even as he occasionally disavows its productive influence.

While the essays provide a thoughtful and interconnected narrative for how best to read Naipaul, they are neither repetitive nor do they always speak in unified chorus. Sometimes the contradictions or differences are not brought to the surface, but flank each other in subtle and interesting ways. For instance, far from taking umbrage at Naipaul's refusal to consider Trinidad an area where a globally significant subject can be "created" without travel, as against other small nations such as Switzerland (Tewarie, p. 189), Evelyn O'Callaghan believes that exile and migration have actually benefited the region. Forced out by their position as outsiders for various reasons, writers like Naipaul bring perspectives from elsewhere that break up the insular mindset of static societies in the Caribbean, India, Africa, and the Middle East. Jamaica Kincaid, Shani Mootoo, Robert Antoni, and others have challenged the homophobia of Caribbean cultures. Their critiques, O'Callaghan continues, are partly Naipaul's legacy as the agent provocateur who left and turned his critical gaze inward on the region. While this may be possible, it is left to Edward Baugh, Cobham-Sander, Paula Morgan, Sandra Pouchet Paquet and Scott to raise the undeniably troubling aspects of Naipaul's work, specifically instances of sexism, racism, and homophobia.

Many of the contributors refer to Naipaul's self-invention, the flickering interface between author and character, the play-acting persona who so often appears to be the narrator himself, but to what extent the sometimes-repellant statements can be separated from the author is not examined too closely. Nevertheless, the various original readings of several works from multiple perspectives including religion, film criticism, and discourse analysis dem-

onstrate the mixed blessings of Naipaul's legacy. Not only is Trinidad no longer the "half-made" society where "litricher and poultry" never exceed the stultified aspiration of B. Wordsworth in *Miguel Street*, it is the generative space where writers like V.S. Naipaul were created.

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Thieving Sugar: Eroticism Between Women in Caribbean Literature. OMISE'EKE NATASHA TINSLEY. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2010. ix + 274 pp. (Paper US\$ 23.95)

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A book that I and others have been waiting for and have wanted for all our lives, Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley's *Thieving Sugar: Eroticism between Women in Caribbean Literature* is at once a culmination and an opening.¹ Now, the longing has met its match. We wait no longer. Tinsley's sea finally wets us down.

As a riverine response to Jamaican lesbian novelist Michelle Cliff's query, "What would it mean for a woman to love another women in the Caribbean?" (pp. 1, 2), Tinsley assembles an archipelago of texts across the borders of geography (Suriname, Jamaica, Haiti, Martinique, and Trinidad), language (Dutch, English, French, and their dynamic Creoles), genre (poetry, dance, song, photography, and literature) and time period (from the first half of the twentieth century to the beginning of the twenty-first). A truly Caribbeanist text for meeting the forbidding challenge of doing a region-wide analysis,

1. Here I appropriate the words of gay Jamaican-American writer and activist Thomas Glave, whose textual longing opens his edited volume *Our Caribbean* (2008). I cite this watershed text both because Glave's words are so appropriate and because many of the artists, activists, and academicians he gathered have longed also to touch Tinsley's text.

Thieving Sugar simultaneously takes up *and* queers the Caribbean landscape in order to chart the various ways by which same-sex-desiring Caribbean women have theorized their own intimate anticolonial paths to each other as a black feminist push against the “empiricism of empire” (p. 18).

Tinsley is able to unearth a disruptive impulse in the epistemological narratives she harvests from the fertile ground of literature in large part because of her critical praxis of “intimate reading” (pp. 27-28). She brings the keen eye and ear of a linguist and a linguistic anthropologist’s attentiveness to the sociocultural worlds woven into language to every text that passes before her. In fact, she is at her strongest when she is officiating over close readings of texts or parsing particular terms – including the (im)mobile terrain of terms one must negotiate in order to describe “same-sex desiring” individuals and communities (pp. 6-9).

Although Tinsley formally cleaves *Thieving Sugar* in two parts, the six chapters that constitute the text resist the sections that only loosely confine them. The work begs to be swallowed whole. Chapter 1 reads the performance poetry of same- (and opposite-) sex desiring *mati* (“girlfriends” in both senses) in turn-of-the-century Suriname as a way to augment the archive of “alternatives to heterosexuality” that have long circulated throughout the African diaspora (p. 37). Chapter 2 reads the symbolic effects of interracial same-sex desire on the colonial racial hierarchy in white Jamaican novelist Eliot Bliss’s 1934 novel, *Luminous Isle* (p. 72). Chapter 3 reads the “undercover [same-sex] eroticism” in the poetry of elite Haitian expatriate Ida Faubert, who writes her “half seen” poetics from an imaginary Haiti while living in 1920s Paris (pp. 105-6).

Chapter 4 reads the queerly authored 1948 pseudo-autobiography of Afro-Martinican novelist Mayotte Capécia *I Am a Martinican Woman*. While sorting through the various lives and names Capécia claims for herself, Tinsley levies a somewhat effusive critique of fluidity as an always libratory metaphor (pp. 138, 168). Chapter 5 reads like a kind of love story between a “male woman” (or a “woman-identified man”) and her/his female love in lauded Jamaican lesbian novelist Michelle Cliff’s 1987 novel, *No Telephone to Heaven* (pp. 171, 174, 175). Through Cliff’s characters, Tinsley delivers a resounding call for a gender/sexuality project mindful of the specificities of non-Euro-American spaces and a postcolonial project open to the possibilities presented by a *Trans*-consciousness (p. 180).

And the final chapter performs an “intertextual reading” of Dionne Brand’s 1990 poetry collection, *No Language Is Neutral*, through a tour-de-force analysis of Brand’s impressive oeuvre without forgoing the intimate precision of reading Brand’s poetry line by line (pp. 205, 220). Using Brand’s writings, Tinsley maps embodied resistance through “intersubjective engagements” and the “radical work of introspection” (p. 204); this cartography also proves a subtle concluding meditation on eroticism and change in the Caribbean (p. 205). And coming full circle, Tinsley’s final chapter takes up the text whose title poem’s final stanza begins with the title of Brand’s 1996 novel (*In Another*

Place, Not Here), whose opening lines provide Tinsley's own title ("Grace. Is grace, yes. And I take it, quiet, quiet, like thieving sugar").

Consistently, each chapter in *Thieving Sugar* is most supple where Tinsley turns to close literary analysis, but she seduces us into these close readings with brief anecdotes about queer life, queer rights, and queer circumstances in the contemporary Caribbean and its diaspora. These introductory segments provide a precarious bridge to literature written a century earlier. This wind-rocked path is perhaps the haunting result of Tinsley being drawn away from her initial intention to work on contemporary texts and issues in the region toward "ancestor texts" from the first half of the twentieth century (p. 4). Nevertheless, the rope bridges between these opening sequences and the texts they introduce are passable if one approaches them without looking down.

These anecdotes tease us in part because we undoubtedly want them to be longer or to return more substantially at the conclusion of each chapter, but they also whet our appetites – even if indirectly – for more flesh and blood sources. Sources like the generous residents of Blanchisseuse (Trinidad) whose stories about the history of their town pointed Tinsley to – and perhaps through – museum archives (p. 255). Tinsley has certainly made use of other living archives – that much is certain; I beg merely for more of the stories she collected in the process of collecting the stories she so masterfully offers us.

Finally, if *Thieving Sugar* refuses to hand over a particularly conspicuous concluding chapter, perhaps this is because the text challenges us to resist the yearning for a formal conclusion and instead embrace another kind of closure. A queer kind of closure that brings us quietly back to the title of the text by another path, and yet offers still an opening, an opportunity, an invitation. Following from her insistence on washing away the divide between theorizing and imagining (p. 28), Tinsley sets us down with a poet in our final moment with her text all the better to *imagine* different "erotic geographies" for Queer Theory and new *creative* uses of same-sex eroticism in Postcolonial Theory (pp. 3-4). Overall, an eagerly welcomed trans-disciplinary text that makes an indelible contribution to African Diaspora Studies, Queer Studies, Caribbean Studies, Transnational Feminist Studies, Postcolonial Studies, and Comparative Literature, *Thieving Sugar* sweetly satiates even the most discerning intellectual appetites.

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Haiti Unbound: A Spiralist Challenge to the Postcolonial Canon. KAIAMA L. GLOVER. Liverpool UK: Liverpool University Press, 2010. xxiv + 262 pp. (Cloth US\$ 95.00)

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Haitians have been writing their people's independent existence ever since Haiti shattered the colonial world in its violent revolution, creating in the process the very lexicon of the postcolonial literary and theoretical discourse. Francophone before the word was invented, the country's writers pioneered the linguistic and aesthetic strategies that allow artists to turn a foreign tongue into a fit instrument for rendering the collective experience. Despite such an avant-garde role in the construction of postcolonial and Francophone literatures, however, Haitian authors have long been either ignored or subject to benign neglect by scholars in postcolonial studies, specialists of Caribbean and Francophone literatures in particular. But the intellectual zeitgeist encouragingly seems to have metamorphosed in the last thirty years, and the muting of Haitian literary voices is now a thing of the past. The increasingly hefty catalog of monographs, special issues of established journals, published articles, and journals devoted to Haitian writings constitutes the clearest sign of the enracination of Haitian letters in the North American academy. Among the most noteworthy recent scholarly contributions to this integration of Haitian literature within the field of postcolonial criticism, Kaiama L. Glover's *Haiti Unbound: A Spiralist Challenge to the Postcolonial Canon* stands out as an insightful study of the Spiralist novel, the narrative fiction of three of Haiti's foremost contemporary writers: the now famous Frankétienne and the lesser known Jean-Claude Fignolé and René Philoctète.

Haiti Unbound is an elegantly conceived work. Following a panoramic preface contextualizing and synthesizing her study, Glover's theorizing of the Spiralist narrative arises organically, in five integrated parts, from her textual analysis of a selection of works by the three novelists: Frankétienne's *Mûr à crever* (1968), *Ultravocal* (1972), and *Les Affres d'un défi* (1979); Fignolé's *Les possédés de la pleine lune* (1987) and *Aube tranquille* (1990); and Philoctète's *Le Peuple des terres mêlées* (1989). Through the close reading of these works she brings into relief the thematics as well as the formal and ideological characteristics of the Spiralist novel. For Glover,

these texts, in “writing the postcolonial subject” (p. xix), dramatically foreground the tensions and contradictions inherent in the postcolonial. These, she proposes, are manifest in the novels’ often dysphoric landscapes, the disjunction between place and identity, the recurring mythos of the zombie, and the narrative polyphony (emblemized particularly in Frankétienne’s “schizophonia”), among a variety of distinctive elements of form and content. Meticulously deconstructing the six selected novels and referencing the writers’ own rare and reluctant theoretical pronouncements, Glover describes Spiralism as “a structural and syntactic narrative model” (p. xxi), which uses a symbolic language in its mimesis of the spiral, dynamic, and open-ended, “integrally reflective of the processes by which organisms and living systems grow and develop” (pp. vii-viii).

Glover states that “*Haiti Unbound* fills [...] a rather astonishingly empty place in the assessment of postcolonial Caribbean aesthetics” (p. xi). She is indulging in a bit of hyperbole here. Indeed, as she herself acknowledges, her work stands on the foundation built by scholars who preceded her in the field, notably Jean Jonassaint (2008) who has studied with great critical insight and scholarly thoroughness the writings of the Spiralist novelist par excellence, Frankétienne. In a rather elegant and direct style that generally eschews the opacity of critical jargon, as she nods to these earlier scholars of Spiralism, Glover achieves superbly her stated intention in *Haiti Unbound*, which is both “to emphasize the singularity of the Spiralists’ aesthetic and discursive interventions” (p. xi) and “to put Frankétienne, Fignolé, and Philoctète in dialogue with regional writers and intellectuals, and to consider the extent to which Spiralism not only connects with but significantly enriches contemporary models of literature and theory in the postcolonial Caribbean” (p. xi).

Everything considered, then, *Haiti Unbound* stands as an impressive scholarly achievement, a most significant contribution to the study of the Caribbean and postcolonial novel. Still, the work evidences a few surprising elisions, some insufficient emphases, and the occasional lack of factual or argumentative nuance. Thus, Glover might have positioned Spiralism as the latest *temps fort* in the historical development of a Haitian aesthetic of the narrative that has been consistently informed by the oral tradition, placing the Spiralist novel in a formal and ideological continuum that proceeds from the folktale to the *lodyans* to the marvelous realist narrative. In view of this organic connection between the oral tradition and the Spiralist narrative, it is rather astonishing that Glover omitted Frankétienne’s Kreyol novel *Dezafi* (1975) from her study. By its use of the Kreyol language, its narrative structure, its world view, and its symbolic and semantic frame of reference, *Dezafi* is in many ways the very template of the Spiralist novel. It is actually a very different work from *Les Affres d’un défi*, which some critics mistakenly think is a translation of the Kreyol work. The aesthetics of *Dezafi* are thus inseparable from the Kreyol language, which is ontologically Spiralist

in its allusiveness, indirectness, and polyphony, and a rather efficacious instrument of subversion and discursive marronage. Finally, in contextualizing Spiralism socially and politically, Glover sometimes resorts to the facile tropes about Haiti, as in her references to the totalitarianism of the Duvalier regime (p. vii) and to the presumed alienation of Haitian writers from the realities of the masses (p. 239). In doing so, she evidences a certain lack of direct familiarity with Haiti, a country where paradoxically social relations are more fluid and political structures more dynamic than her categorical pronouncements might suggest. Generally, a more nuanced understanding of the socio-political context of the Spiralist phenomenon might have led to more finely modulated extrapolations and conclusions about the Spiralist novel and social realities.

Haiti Unbound will considerably enrich the scholarly field of Caribbean and Francophone literary criticism and theory in particular, and of postcolonial studies in general. By foregrounding Spiralism as a narrative mode rooted indeed in Haiti but with rhizome-like connections to the rest of the Caribbean, Glover's book does indeed widen the postcolonial theoretical field. Nonetheless, it calls for a sequel, one that would highlight Spiralism as a modality of the Kreyol discourse, in all its subversive capacity and symbolic power, in its maroon-like ability to liberate the postcolonial subject from an oppressive reality.

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Divergent Dictions: Contemporary Dominican Literature. NÉSTOR E. RODRÍGUEZ. Coconut Creek FL: Caribbean Studies Press, 2010. 178 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.50)

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The oft-neglected, multifaceted, and complex literary production of the Dominican Republic is once more receiving the attention it deserves from scholars. In *Divergent Dictions*, the newly published translation and updated version of his *Escrituras de desencuentros en la República Dominicana* (2005), Néstor E. Rodríguez analyzes texts whose significance and value have been determined by their proximity to the discourse of identity. His objective is to identify the “epistemic variables” that have perpetuated this rhetoric in the definition of Dominican identity. In fact, Rodríguez refers to its pernicious influence upon all forms of Dominican culture as a symbolic form of violence. For him, the fact that *dominicanidad* is a racial identification with a native population that hasn’t existed since the sixteenth century illustrates this point as well as the demonization of the Dominican diaspora. Although he laments that the foundation of the national identity has remained unchanged for centuries, *Divergent Dictions* illustrates that there has been significant effort to dismantle its rhetoric.

The book is organized into five chapters preceded by a brief Introduction. In Chapter 1, Rodríguez dismantles the premises sustaining the pro-Hispanic discourse that corroborates the fictitious ethnicity of the Dominican “race.” The concept of Dominican national identity was first initiated by nationalists of the nineteenth century emerging from the twenty-two years of Haitian occupation, but was perfected over time by the “theoretical Trujillismo” which fabricated its foundation upon the Hispanophile discourse of (racist) nationalism.

In Chapter 2, Rodríguez identifies the perpetuation of the stagnant theoretical apparatus of *dominicanidad* by analyzing the essays of the “intellectual triad” of the 1940s, Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, Joaquín Balaguer, and Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi, and the contemporary essayist Manuel Núñez. He contends that the discourse of Dominican national identity remains unchanged today because the intelligentsia still believe that the sovereignty of the nation is dependent upon a homogenous vision of culture based on shared racial and

ethnic origins, as well as religious and linguistic communality. Rodríguez shows that the perdurability of the discourse of *dominicanidad* is directly dependent upon the collaboration of political power and culture when he discusses Balaguer's pseudo-scientific/cultural study, *La realidad dominicana: Semblanza de un país y de un regimen* (1947).¹ He proposes that Núñez, in identifying the common trope of the *Trujillista* city as the "most Spanish and most traditionalist in America,"² was hoping to update its fundamental message in order to ensure its continuity. Rodríguez argues that despite Núñez's belief that his essays form new ideologies about *dominicanidad*, his ideas are essentially identical to those in the previous works of Trujillo loyalists. In *El ocaso de la dominicanidad* (1990, 2001) Rodríguez writes that Núñez camouflages the very same ideology in his rhetoric of disaster for fear of the loss national sovereignty.

To counter the rhetoric of disaster of those intellectuals who are finding themselves "increasingly incapable of dominating the debate on Dominican cultural identity," Rodríguez brings in the poetic production of Manuel de Cabral, Hernández Franco, and Aída Cartagena Portalatín in Chapter 3. Even before the assassination of Trujillo, he asserts, writing against the theoretical apparatus functioned in the margins of society. Citing examples from *Trópico negro* (1942) and *Compadre Mon* (1943), he suggests that del Cabral's creation of the black subject evokes an admission of African heritage in the nation. Despite the fact that other critics disagree with his assertion, he argues that del Cabral's poetry is an act of defiance if we consider that his use of the black subject comes during a critical point of the anti-black movement, under Trujillo. Although Hernández Franco held opinions that coincided with those of the regime, Rodríguez interprets his poem *Yelidá* (1942) as subverting the *trujillista dominicanidad*. However, Rodríguez once again finds his opinion about the representation of the *mulata* at odds with other critics. On the other hand, Rodríguez credits Aída Cartagena Portalatín for taking the first great leaps to foreground the subjectivity of women, making her the first Dominican writer to escape the patriarchal "homo-hegemony" of the discourse. He affirms that the poems from *Una mujer está sola* (1955) make "one feminine voice's declaration of agency" that serves as a call to action.

In the fourth chapter, Rodríguez asserts that Aurora Arias, Rita Indiana Hernández, and Manuel Rueda make a frontal attack on the premises of Dominican ethos in their effort to subvert the ideal of a fixed cultural identity. In Rueda's 1998 polemic epic poem, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, he sees a criticism of the use of the island as a foundational trope. According to

1. This essay was updated and republished in 1983 as *La isla al revés*.

2. From Joaquín Balaguer *La isla al revés* (Santo Domingo: Librería Dominicana, 1983), p. 53.

Rodríguez, Rueda's depiction of the island as chaotic and unstable, incorporating a symbiotic relationship with the Haitian leader Makandal, subverts the dominant discourse. Similarly, he identifies the literature of Arias and Hernández as subversive in its proposal for the re-writing of Dominican history. He considers Arias's books of short stories – *Invi's Paradise y otros relatos* (1998) and *Fin de mundo y otros relatos* (2000) – the demonstration of a “hyperconsciousness” of a past that remains an obstacle for modernity. Hernández's novel *La estrategia de Chochueca* (2000) has a postmodern element in her treatment of the surmountable Past. In this way, the Past's power is taken away, history is undermined and questioned to the point that it loses its importance entirely.

The final chapter of *Divergent Dictions* focuses on the diaspora and its literary production that challenges the accepted national identity discourse prevalent on the island, as the writer in exile (re)constructs the *isla imaginada*. While Rodríguez considers the writers of the diaspora non-conformists, his analysis of the essays of Silvio Torres Saillant in *El retorno de las yolas* (1999) shows that they perpetuate the same “hegemonic norm” that they aspire to subvert. Rodríguez argues that Torres Saillant's goals of recovery of the authentic identity differ very little from the identity myth that had already defined the *dominicanidad*. Rodríguez also recognizes Julia Álvarez's novel, *How the García Girls Lost their Accents* (1991), as an example of diasporic writing whose significance is in its act of evocation. Like Torres Saillant, Álvarez is also talking back to the island, a geographic space she no longer occupies, but continues feeling attached to culturally. The perspective of cultural ambivalence in the literature of the diaspora illustrates that its critical approach is inherently centered on identity politics with the intentions of forming a new paradigm.

Divergent Dictions is a short but densely packed critical work that thoroughly studies and analyzes the theoretical foundation of the rhetoric of national identity encompassing every facet of Dominican culture as it is observed in contemporary Dominican literature. It is by far the most complete study of the issues of racial/ethnic and national identity and its literary conspirators. In this updated and translated version of his original monograph in Spanish, Rodríguez also provides a superb introduction to some of the lesser-known Dominican American authors. The book is a must-have for every humanities library and should be a required text in courses on Hispanic Caribbean literature. In addition, this study of culture vis-à-vis literature is appropriate for Latin American Studies, African Diaspora Studies, Anthropology, and U.S. Latino Studies programs. The translation finally makes Rodríguez's research accessible to an academic English-speaking readership.

The Caribbean Short Story: Critical Perspectives. LUCY EVANS, MARK MCWATT & EMMA SMITH (eds.). Leeds, U.K.: Peepal Tree Press, 2010. 356 pp. (Paper £19.99)

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The Caribbean Short Story constitutes a significant contribution to Caribbean literary studies, in particular the movement to expand Anglophone Caribbean literary historiography that has so privileged the predominately male, London-based novelists of the 1950s, such as George Lamming and V.S. Naipaul. Editors Lucy Evans, Mark McWatt, and Emma Smith present strong evidence that the focus on this generation has also privileged the novel, reducing the short story to a training phase for Caribbean writers. While Caribbean literary scholars have overlooked the critical role played by short stories in the development of the region's literature, literary theorists of the short story and editors of anthologies have tended to omit the Caribbean all together. This omission results, Evans *et al.* argue, from theorists' emphasis on the formal characteristics of the short story, which has blinkered scholars to the importance of historical context – a decisive factor in shaping Caribbean literature. The collection's introduction and nineteen original essays redress these lacks by outlining the prominent role of the short story in the historical development of Caribbean literature and in the work of canonical poets and novelists, including Kamau Brathwaite, Jean Rhys, and V.S. Naipaul. Furthermore, they illuminate the importance of short stories by non-canonical authors such as Seepersad Naipaul, Edwina Melville, and Inez Sibley and provide the foundation for a new theory of the Caribbean short story grounded in the region's history of colonialism and migration.

Part I, "Publishing Histories," radically expands and rethinks Anglophone Caribbean literary historiography of the 1940s-1960s, a period of particular interest because it saw the simultaneous development of nation states and of national literature. Based on extensive archival research, Alison Donnell's analysis of short stories broadcast on the influential BBC program *Caribbean Voices*, and Suzanne Scafe's study of short stories published in Jamaican newspapers and magazines (*The Gleaner*, *Public Opinion*, and *Focus*) document that literature of this period included more women writers, more Caribbean residents, more experimental narrative techniques, and a more diverse vision of ethnicity, modernity, and the nation than the corpus of novels

suggests. Essays focused on single authors Seepersad Naipaul, Ismith Khan, and Andrew Salkey further enhance our understanding of this critical period. For instance, James Proctor explicates Seepersad Naipaul's highly nuanced representation of Indo-Trinidadians' negotiation of modernity and tradition to argue that Naipaul's short stories, long seen as inward-looking contemplations of rural Hindu communities, participated both in the development of Trinidadian national literature marked by the emergence of yard fiction and the *Beacon* group and in the international movement of writers centered in London. Jak Peake reinforces Proctor's sense of the coherence of Trinidad's literary tradition by tracing the way Earl Lovelace and Lawrence Scott have transformed the trope of the yard formulated by the *Beacon* group. By contrast, Raymond Ramcharitar attacks this tradition and the half-century of scholarship that has presented the *Beacon* group as inaugurating the region's nationalist aesthetics. The *Beacon* Group, he argues, in fact "stunted the growth of a 'national' literature" because it reproduced British colonial tropes and therefore lacked a national imaginary (p. 74). Patricia Catoira's analysis of the impact of the fall of the Soviet Union on the Cuban short story offers a fascinating counterpoint to these studies of the Anglophone Caribbean.

Part II, "Sociopolitical Contexts," complements these examinations of the history of the West Indian short story with three essays on the representation of history in Caribbean short stories. Abigail Ward analyses Khan's portrayal of the legacies of Indian indentureship; Elizabeth Hackshaw-Walcott explicates the use of temporal frames to depict Haitian history and politics in the short stories of Yanick Lahens and Edwidge Danticat; and Claire Westall explores the emphasis on cricket and socialization in a broad spectrum of writers including Sam Selvon, Beryl Gilroy, and Cyril Dabydeen.

The remaining three sections – "Modernity and Modernisms," "Folk Tales and Oral Traditions," and "Generic Boundaries and Transgressions" – examine the theoretical significance of form. For instance, three essays illuminate the refashioning of anancy stories and other forms of oral tradition by Andrew Salkey (Emily Zobel Marshall), Nalo Hopkinson (Gina Wisker), and Pauline Melville (Patricia Murray) to criticize contemporary phenomena from white standards of beauty to postcolonial corruption and corporate destruction of the environment. Elaine Savory traces Brathwaite's reinvention of the short story form through poetry and national language since the 1950s while Shirley Chew illuminates a parallel play between poetry and prose in the work of Olive Senior. Taken together, these suggest that Caribbean short story writers share the imperative for formal innovation and generic border crossings between non-fiction and fiction, between oral and scribal tradition, between poetry and prose. This diversity and fluidity of form reflect the shared desire to narrate the relationship between the violence and alienation of the colonial past and those of the postcolonial present; to articulate Caribbeans' experience of diaspora and migration; and to make

visible Caribbean modernity by challenging the oppositional relationship traditionally posited between peasantry and city folk, between metropole and colony, and among ethnic and racial groups. While novelists and cultural critics share much of this agenda, these essays suggest that the form of the short story and the short story collection have theoretical advantages. Thus, Dave Gunning argues that largely neglected short story collections – Claude McKay’s *Gingertown* and Eric Walrond’s *Tropic Death* – offer a more complex vision of black internationalism than do the novels, such as McKay’s *Banjo*, that scholars have used as a foundation for their theory because short stories and collections feature multiple geographical and historical settings, protagonists, and narrative styles. By contrast, the novel, Gunning argues, is limited by its historical and formal association with narrating the nation.

The collection is greater than the sum of its well-reasoned and well-written essays because its focus on one genre bridges longstanding divides between pre- and post-1950s writing, between male and female authors, and between writers based in the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. I recommend it with great enthusiasm.

Society of the Dead: Quita Manaquita and Palo Praise in Cuba. TODD RAMÓN OCHOA. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. xi + 313 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

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Palo practitioners in Cuba live immersed in a world of the dead. The dead may be dear ancestors called upon by name, or they may be anonymous immanent forces. They may be harnessed in steel cauldrons, bitted and bridled, cursed, reviled, adored, fed, and forced to work. They may be revered in tiny corner alters consisting of broomsticks and decrepit dolls’ heads, sharing plates of rotting food with Havana’s rats. The dead leave their traces in the world of the living through the most insignificant signals: a glance, a pun, a tremor, goose bumps, or an unnamable nagging feeling that robs you of sleep. But they can also be as momentous as a murder on Good Friday.

Todd Ramón Ochoa immerses us in this Cuban world of the ambient dead. His narrative ethnography is sometimes terrifying, always compelling, and perhaps unique in the long history of writings on Cuban religions that draw their inspiration from Africa. His object of study may be loosely termed as Palo. Palo hovers in an ill-defined space between magic, witchcraft, and religion. Ochoa calls it an inspiration. Palo practitioners harness the power of the dead to the projects of the living. They work this power for good or for evil and certainly for money. They embrace the labels *brujo* and *brujería* (witch and witchcraft) and are cavalier in their dealings with the Devil. They are frank in their malice and kind to their suffering clients. They work in a morally ambivalent world that anthropologists have often preferred to ignore.

Perhaps this is why Ochoa has chosen to avoid (or relegate to his end-notes) the vast literature on Afro-Cuban religions. This may be a virtue rather than a shortcoming as this literature is all too easily wrapped up in its own parochial debates and stale retellings of African origin myths. His only ethnographic interlocutors are the founding mother and father of Afro-Cuban religious studies: Lydia Cabrera and Fernando Ortiz (both of whom are long overdue for English translations). His theoretical references are drawn from Continental philosophy and critical theory. But this is not a book that will be remembered for its bibliography. It will be remembered for the unsettling portrait that it paints of the power of the dead in times of economic hardship.

Ochoa begins with the world of Kalunga, the fluid, amorphous, and omnipresent realm of the dead. Individual spirits, beloved ancestors of blood or ritual families, may emerge from Kalunga to offer succor and wise counsel to their descendants. But for the most part the power of Kalunga exists in potentia, imperceptible to all but the most sensitive and knowledgeable adepts. It underlies everything. It accounts for successes and failures in the most quotidian actions, like trying to wrest some cooking oil, a light bulb, or a course of antibiotics from Cuba's illegal markets. It underpins the baroque ceremonial finery of the religion known to outsiders as Santería, whose practitioners admit that *Iku lobi ocha* (*El muerto pare Santo*) or The dead give birth to the Saint.

Santería and Palo are usually opposed in the ethnosociology of religious forms in Cuba. The first stands for benevolent healing and worship. The second stands for malevolent witchcraft and magic. Palo is often publicly reviled (even if it is privately practiced) by adepts of the cult of the Orichas. Paleros may be initiates to Santería. However, they draw their power not from the Saints but from the dead.

The materialization of and channel for this power is the Nganga. The Nganga takes many forms and goes by many names. It is a cauldron made of steel or clay containing graveyard dirt and other powerful powders, railroad spikes, stakes of sacred wood, and a human skull. Ochoa was a party to the making of several Ngangas. He describes the conniving with gravediggers and traffickers in stolen human remains, the labyrinthine networks of ille-

gal commerce in religious goods, the struggle to find sacred plants in urban spaces, and the erotic fascination of blood sacrifice.

He tells us what it is like to put the Nganga to work on missions of mercy or hate designed to alter the fates of living men and women. He gives us a vertiginous glimpse into a world rife with envy, gossip, and slander where revenge is taken with bloody incantations and bilongo charms buried in cemeteries.

Most Ngangas, paradoxically enough, are Christian. In their heart lies the skull of a man, woman, or child baptized in the Catholic Church. While they were alive they were washed in the metaphorical Blood of the Lamb. After they die they are laved in the very real blood of chickens and goats when they are seated in their sacred cauldrons. As Christians, they cannot kill. But the privilege of murder is not denied to the even more fearsome Prendas Júdias, the Jewish Ngangas.

It is a strange ethnohistory that makes Jews more murderous than Christians in the eyes of Cuba's African-inspired witches. It is not much stranger that the skulls of Chinese immigrants and condemned murderers are somehow more Jewish than the ones robbed from Havana's tiny and presumably depleted Hebrew Cemetery. These dead Chinese Jews of African Cuba are sent on their murderous errands on Good Friday when Jesus hangs on the Cross and the Devil is on the loose in the world.

Palo is an open secret. There will be some who believe that its stories are better left untold, and they may be right. But Palo has found its ethnographer and for better or for worse, his stories ring true.

El Lector: A History of the Cigar Factory Reader. ARACELI TINAJERO. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010. xviii + 268 pp. (Cloth US\$ 50.00)

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El Lector documents the diffusion of the practice of reading aloud in tobacco factories from Havana to Spain, Puerto Rico, the United States, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. In 2006, Casa de las Américas awarded an honorable mention to the Spanish-language manuscript of this volume. Tinajero, graced with an agile and enjoyable prose, presents a historical tour of the

factory reader tradition from its beginnings to the present, in the style of a nineteenth-century travelogue. Upon meeting a reader in Havana, she began “trembling and stuttering” (p. xv). She interviewed male readers in cigar factories and female readers at leaf stemmeries (p. xvi) and used her professional training in Spanish literature very effectively, constantly bringing in literary characters to explain the emergence, changing role, and sunset of readers.

The book’s first part (Chapters 1-2) addresses the origins of the reading-aloud tradition up to 1900. Chapter 1 traces recitation from Greek antiquity through medieval monasteries to conclude that the design of cigar factories resembled that of monasteries, and that the reader’s raised platform bears a similarity to the pulpit. Between the initiation of the practice at Havana’s El Fígaro cigar factory in 1865 and the early 1890s, the reader became a well-established figure in factories. Cigarmakers’ committees often chose reading materials that faced opposition from the manufacturers. The printed matter that was read ranged from local newspapers and socialist and anarchist literature to the works of Victor Hugo, Charles Dickens, and Alexandre Dumas, among others. Tinajero then recounts the life of a character named Amparo in Emilia Pardo Bazán’s *La Tribuna* who was a reader at a cigar and cigarette-factory in A Coruña, Spain, presenting an analysis Amparo’s personal life and growing class consciousness. Much of Amparo’s radicalism stemmed from the literature she read to the women workers. As expected, the managers of the factory tried to suppress reading aloud because of the nature of the texts. Tinajero’s contextualization of Spanish tobacco relies heavily on José Pérez Vidal’s *España en la historia del tabaco*, ignoring Ana Romero’s history of the Palloza factory, which provided the setting for Pardo Bazán’s novel.

Overall, the research and discussion show a markedly Cuba-centric bias, which becomes the book’s strength but also its weakness. The Cuban sections are up to date and better discussed than those beyond the periphery of Havana factories. Despite its encompassing subtitle, the book does not examine the reading tradition outside the areas where the Havana style of cigar-making took root, though Tinajero does mention a reader in David Hirsch’s mostly German-manned cigar factory in New York. Hirsch’s case was not unique; other U.S. cities, such as Detroit, had readers in German cigar factories with no known Cuban connection. Had the exploration been expanded to Germany, the *Vorleser* – the reader – would have appeared as a central figure to cigar makers and among the most class-conscious workers. The *Vorleser* became so closely associated with the cigar makers that sculptures representing the two of them can be seen in some German public spaces.

The book’s second part (Chapters 3-5) follows the diffusion of the reading tradition to Key West and Tampa, and to the legendary Luisa Capetillo. Chapter 3 documents readers’ activities outside of their factory jobs. Some of the readers were distinguished literary figures; for example, Ramiro de Maeztu, a sometime reader in Havana, and others were notable defenders of

Cuban independence. Tinajero argues that besides having a powerful voice, most readers were respected members of their communities. They occupied significant cultural spaces in their capacity as masters of ceremonies and were influential in the hiring of musicians and literary figures.

Chapter 4, on Tampa, documents the strong opposition of cigar manufacturers to factory reading because of the socialist and anarchist content of many texts. In time, the radio diminished notably the tradition of reading aloud. Tinajero patiently documents the jobs of the displaced readers, concluding that many found employment in the very medium that replaced them. Chapter 5 centers, not on a cigar manufacturing center, but on one itinerant reader, Luisa Capetillo and, following the *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega*, depicts the life of cigar makers in New York. Capetillo, a reader in her native Puerto Rico, as well as Havana and Tampa, became one of the first women to gain renown for her reading skills. The literature written by workers in cigar factories followed what Tinajero wrote about Capetillo. "In essence, they wrote to be read aloud" (p. 147).

The book's third section (Chapters 6-9) follows readers in twentieth-century Cuba, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. Chapter 6, focusing on Cuba up to the Revolution, pays considerable attention to Cristina García's, *The Agüero Sisters*, especially Reinaldo Agüero, a reader, who is the grandfather of the two main characters. Chapter 7 follows readers from the Revolution to 2005. After the Revolution, the number of women reading increased notably in the factories. Today, while tobacco workers still listen to readers, they spend more time with the radio. Socialist and anarchist literature and novels have given way to the reproduction of speeches and other forms of recitation.

The depth and breadth of the Cuban chapters seem lacking in Chapters 8 and 9, which are devoted to Mexico and the Dominican Republic. Tinajero manages a good rendition of contemporary reading practices during the second half of the twentieth century as she relies principally on interviews with aged workers. Had historical materials been included, the discussion of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could have gained the scope of the Cuban sections. To mention just one example, reading was so ingrained among cigarmakers that its reestablishment became a central demand during one of the longest strikes in Dominican history (Baud 1990:9).

El Lector is an update and expansion, beyond Cuba, of Rivero Muñiz's extraordinary "La lectura en las tabaquerías." The volume is a refreshing depiction of a major source of the reading-aloud tradition and its implications for working class radicalism and Cuban national identity.

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Blazing Cane: Sugar Communities, Class, and State Formation in Cuba, 1868-1959. GILLIAN MCGILLIVRAY. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2009. xxvi + 386 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

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Based on a study of two communities of sugar mill workers, *Blazing Cane* explores the involvement of the working classes in the formation of the Cuban state in the period up to 1959, setting out a more nuanced, complex, and less linear version of the story than previous studies. By drawing on local history sources, Gillian McGillivray is able to add other groups to the narrative and to uncover other facets going beyond the version of national history that has at times restricted itself to the history of the city of La Havana and its province, or to Santiago de Cuba. Her analysis of the evolution of Cuban society and politics focuses on two sugar-producing communities as a lens through which to examine the involvement of other sectors of society in the process of nation building. This is not an easy task, given that, as other authors such as Robert Whitney have pointed out, it is difficult to define and quantify the Cuban middle class. In Cuba, up until the end of the 1920s, the basic distinction used to define the country's social groups divided the population into the *clases económicas* and the *clases populares*. This landscape became more complex in the late 1920s, however, with the swelling of the

ranks of public employees, teachers, lawyers, merchants, and people working in the services sector during the early decades of the century.

Taking this social and economic context as her starting point, McGillivray's aim is to show that we can only understand the country's changes by focusing on both international and local actors. She therefore studies the development of the social classes linked to sugar production (sugar workers, cane farmers, and owners of the sugar mills) from 1868 to 1959 and examines their contribution to the formation of the state. Throughout the study she seeks to establish a dialogue between international developments and the conduct of different groups both nationally and locally. Thus she analyzes how local matters were related to changes in power nationally and internationally from the comparative study of two sugar mills, Tuinucú and Chaparra, located in the center of the country (Las Villas province) and on the eastern border of the sugar-growing area. The choice of the two communities reflects the very different role each played in the history of Cuba, in terms of their modes of production and use of labor, as well as in the epoch shaping their development. Tuinucú had a presence going back to the colonial period, whereas Chaparra began to gain in importance after 1898, becoming much more significant on the political scene and the fight for sugar workers' rights than Tuinucú.

The study also focuses on Spanish landowner Manuel Rionda, owner of the Tuinucú sugar mill and a key figure in Cuban business history. He created one of the largest sugar production and marketing groups in Cuba, consisting of three companies: the Czarnikow-Rionda Company, the Cuban Trading Sugar Company, and the Cuban Cane Sugar Corporation. The Rionda family acts as the guiding thread running through the account of the country's economic and social development as well as workers' responses to these changes (union struggles, strikes, formation of workers' and political associations, militancy, etc.).

At the end of the period studied, McGillivray discusses new interpretations of the 1959 Revolution by including new social actors such as workers, many of them from the middle class. In this context she notes that in 1959 as in 1868, working-class action (the burning of cane fields) drove the reforms that followed. From her study of these years, she concludes that more work on the cold war is needed before accepting the story that the leaders and fighters of the Revolution acted in a context from which a middle class was absent.

Despite this observation, McGillivray has not managed to move beyond the political history of Cuba and set it in a broader context in which the cold war acted as a decisive factor in its evolution, especially in the case of the popular nationalism of the 1940s. The political dialogue between the international and national context from which to explain the political development and evolution of the Cuban state remains to be established. In this regard, a complement to the analysis that is missing from McGillivray's work on how Cuban nationalism relates to international politics, and to U.S. politics

in particular, can be found in Vanni Pettinà's *Cuba y Estados Unidos, 1933-1959*, whose main aim is to analyze the relationships between U.S. foreign policy and the processes of political change in Cuba between 1933 and 1959.

Finally, the extensive search that McGillivray has made of primary and secondary sources in various archives in Cuba and the United States stands out, as does her use of oral history as a means of recording certain recent past events that have in some cases left no trace in the written documentation. Despite these efforts however, inexplicably, her research makes no reference to important works produced in Spain in recent years, and it makes only fleeting reference to just a few books published in this country. A dialogue with these studies could have further enriched and strengthened the methodological apparatus of *Blazing Cane*.

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The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawai'i. CHRISTINE SKWIOT. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. 283 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.95)

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In an original and provocative analysis, historian Christine Skwiot examines the simultaneous development of tourism and the workings of empire in Cuba and Hawaii. *The Purposes of Paradise* is a well-argued and detailed study, presenting a close reading of travel narratives with institutional investigation contextualized in political, social, and cultural histories of colonialism. It describes how Hawaiians and Cubans struggled with issues of sovereignty, settler colonialism, and race-based labor formations from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth and documents how the expansion of U.S. tourism worked to support the making of U.S. empire. Through an

examination of writings by statesmen, journalists, travel writers, tourism promoters, and newspaper editors, Skwiot shows how their cultural productions worked with a multiplicity of imperial and anti-imperial ideas and praxis. Racial, sexual, and gender politics figure prominently in her analysis. Recognizing that the writings were not simply amusing material but narratives with extensive and widespread consequences for the construction of empire, she focuses on divergences, commonalities, contradictions, and the agreements that brought together these “fantasy islands ripe for seduction.”

Chapter 1, “First Fruits of a Tropical Eden,” describes how travelogue writers, annexationists, politicians, and designers of tourism projects articulated a vision for Cuba and Hawaii as territories worthy of inclusion in the United States and destined to be governed by whites. This required reforming discourses of race to transform the racialized subjects of the islands as worthy of and “capable of becoming American enough, civilized enough, republican enough, and white enough to warrant the privilege of joining the body politic” (p. 16). The inspirational and educational travel writings converted armchair travelers into agents of Manifest Destiny as ideas of conquest, occupation, and settler colonialism were reinforced as natural, inevitable, and consensual.

Chapter 2, “Garden Republics or Plantation Regimes?,” traces the development of influential enclaves at the beginning of the twentieth century, as exclusive white elite communities were formed in Honolulu’s Waikiki and Havana’s Marianao to accommodate and attract tourism investors and private planters as dominant governing classes. This chapter studies the configuration of informal colonial control and political management and its connection to tourism. In 1898, U.S. citizens who condemned European imperial politics as oppressive had to reconcile their perceptions with the forcible annexation of Hawaii and the occupation of Cuba. Helped by the education provided through travel narratives, they could persist in believing that they were delivering liberty, republican virtue, and economic development.

To deal with the upheavals of annexation and occupation, elites turned to tourism and the pleasures of imperialism that it created. In Chapter 3, “Royal Resorts for Tropical Tramps,” Skwiot establishes the importance of creating fantasies about Hawaiian royalty and the sexual allure of the conquered exotic “others” for the promotion and enhancement of white subjectivities. At the same time that histories of anti-imperialism and racialized labor strife were repressed, tourists were lured by casinos, hula, and erotic pleasure, represented as part of the nature of the locals and unrelated to the staging of tourism enterprises.

Chapter 4, “Revolutions, Reformations, Restorations,” begins with a rape trial in Hawaii that exposed the double standard of the law for haole and people of color. The sexualized racial politics of the 1930s-1950s opened possibilities for Cubans and Hawaiians to escalate their clamor for rights and

racial democracy. The struggles were often framed against inequalities established by tourism, an imperial project that affirmed colonialism and exposed everything that was wrong with U.S. domination.

Chapter 5, “Travels to Another Revolution and to Statehood” and the Conclusion, consider Hawaiian statehood and the Cuban Revolution. Resonant with the annexationist politics of half a century earlier, revolution and statehood supporters continued to ignore a long history of U.S. exploitation and the opposition to annexation, colonial rule, and statehood that it generated. Multiple narratives maintained that the people of Cuba and Hawaii were connected to the United States by affection and kinship, obligation and fate. Throughout the book, however, Skwiot proposes that U.S. empire worked to whiten the islands and erase natives, blacks, and working-class immigrants. In Chapter 5 she offers a riveting scrutiny of the role of the U.S. media in crafting narratives about Cuban revolutionaries and Hawaiian mixed-race people as almost white and hence worthy of acceptance. She argues forcefully that the abuses of U.S. empire were not unlike those of other empires.

The Purposes of Paradise is a must-read for scholars of empire, postcolonialism, Pacific and the Caribbean history, area studies, tourism studies, and critical ethnic and gender studies, as well as for upper-division and graduate courses in these areas.

A History of the Cuban Revolution. AVIVA CHOMSKY. Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. xi + 241 pp. (Paper US\$ 21.95)

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Aviva Chomsky has written an engaging, accessible, and concise overview of the Cuban Revolution of 1959. This book is intended as a primer for students and newcomers to the field of Cuban Studies, and in that capacity it succeeds admirably. Chomsky analyzes Cuba's revolutionary society in broad brushstrokes, synthesizing recent scholarship from both Cuba and the United States. Her stated aim is to demystify the popular imagery of Cuba as either a rum-drenched beach resort or a “dingy, gray, repressed police state, where

citizens live in dreary fear” (p. 193). The book’s overarching argument is that the Cuban Revolution, despite being a poorly understood phenomenon, sheds light on broader trends within the Western hemisphere, such as the entrenched underdevelopment and deep social inequality of former colonial societies.

Several aspects of the book make it particularly suitable for course use. Chomsky recaps various authors’ conflicting assessments on issues such as race, popular culture, economic reform, and so on, all without openly taking sides, an approach that may prove fruitful for sparking classroom debate. Moreover, the book follows developments all the way through 2009, making it one of the most up-to-date surveys available. This clarifies certain trends, such as the nearly full reversal, after 2005, of the economic reforms introduced during the Special Period of the 1990s, and the emergence of an overwhelmingly disaffected generation of Cubans, too young to remember the relative economic stability of the 1970s and 1980s. Chomsky briefly mentions Raul Castro’s rise to the presidency in 2008, which roughly coincided with the U.S. election of Barack Obama; yet as she notes, these changes in leadership have not resulted in significant alterations to bilateral relations.

With an eye toward accessibility, Chomsky has used clear and concise language and provides succinct explanations of key terms such as capitalism, socialism, dependency theory, *négritude*, and so on. The brevity and self-contained nature of the chapters make them easy to assign on their own. The book will thus serve as a complement or alternative to classic overviews such as Marifeli Pérez-Stable’s *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course and Legacy*, and Louis Pérez Jr.’s *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*.

The book is organized more or less thematically, beginning with two introductory chapters that gloss Cuban history to 1959 and briefly explain Cuban socialism’s socio-economic achievements and failures. A third chapter (the only one to draw significantly on primary sources) provides a detailed discussion of U.S. policy toward the Revolution. Subsequent chapters treat diversity, internationalism, and the arts. The final two chapters provide a detailed account of Cuba’s Special Period, drawing on scholarship and to some extent on Chomsky’s personal observations during travels to the island.

Some chapters and sections are stronger than others. For example, Chomsky’s attempt to clarify the murky history of the U.S. government’s continued support for, or at least tolerance of, exile attempts at sabotage on the island is particularly useful, although it remains unclear how effective or damaging such attacks were. And her chapter on art and culture contains a fine discussion of internal political debate, in which she includes the subtle critique voiced internally by some Cuban intellectuals, usually drowned out by the media focus on dissidents. As she notes, “there exists a voice in Cuban intellectual life that seeks change from within, seeking to slowly open space for dialogue and debate by their own work” (p. 131).

Chomsky tends to focus on structural, cultural, and social change, deemphasizing formal political structures and the role of the leadership. In general, this is a welcome approach in a field still dominated by biographies and diplomatic histories. Yet it can also lead the book to skirt some thorny questions, such as whether popular opinion coincides with the leadership on certain issues, and to what extent popular support has eroded over time. For example, Chomsky cites one recent survey (p. 15) suggesting that 47 percent of Cubans “approved” of their government while 40 percent “disapproved.” Of course, these figures reflect the relative exhaustion and disenchantment that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union and Cuba’s consequent economic catastrophe; the regime likely had far higher support prior to 1990. But statistics such as these nevertheless seem to require some further explanation or discussion, especially given the triumphalist expressions of unanimity that emanate from the Cuban government.

This issue points to a larger question about the way the book is framed. Chomsky strives to debunk myths of Cuba as a tourist paradise or police state, but she is less concerned with challenging the officialist narratives of the Cuban Revolution propagated by the leadership itself. A slightly more critical eye in this regard might have been welcome. Still, although the book is largely sympathetic to the Cuban Revolution in its tone and interpretations, it wisely avoids overt judgments. As Chomsky notes in her conclusions, “I do not wish to sum up the Cuban revolutionary experience or cast an overarching judgment on it. The Revolution has been wildly audacious, experimental, and diverse. It has evolved under often adverse circumstances. It created unprecedented socioeconomic equality ... It also showed just how extraordinarily difficult it is to overcome economic underdevelopment” (pp. 194-95).

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The Cubalogues: Beat Writers in Revolutionary Havana. TODD F. TIETCHEN. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. xiii + 194 pp. (Paper US\$ 29.95)

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The Cubalogues promises to explore an oft-commented but ill-comprehended episode of U.S.-Cuban cultural intercourse: the Beat writers in Havana and Havana in the Beats ... or how the Cuban Revolution irrupted into the consciousness of the United States' nascent New Left in the early 1960s and how this drew some of the most prominent exponents of the Beat aesthetic southwards to experience, and perhaps participate in, what C. Wright Mills called "a spontaneous anti-capitalist democracy in its becoming" (in Tietchen p. 39).

Tietchen sets the scene of this Beat extrospection with great skill. Hemmed-in and harried by a rigid "rational world paradigm" (Walter Fisher, in Tietchen p. 40) with rabid anti-communism at its core, and by a bullish assertion of heteronormative order, the Beats allowed their imaginations to wander in what Tietchen calls a "quest for anti-nationalistic conceptions of human community and 'stranger' expressions of political subjectivity" (p. 29). In revolutionary Cuba in the early 1960s, the quest seemed to have come to an end. Captivated by the precedence of praxis over ideological premeditation, by the endemic and effervescent spontaneity, and by the apparent permeability to transnational cultural exchange, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Harold Cruse, Marc Schleifer, Amiri Baraka, and others beheld the Cuban Revolution as an epiphanic "true world forum" where the analogical myopia afflicting Western metaphysics would quickly be cured (C. Wright Mills, in Tietchen p. 44).

Tietchen's analysis of the diverse Beat responses to Cuba beyond this utopic first impression is also commendable. Through the *bildungsroman* of a carnivalesque train journey down the spine of the island to hear Fidel Castro speak, he traces a coming-of-age among these authors, both in their growing impatience with the more politically vapid fringes of Beat and in a cooling of their original fervor for the Cuban revolutionary experiment.

Regrettably, Tietchen's reading of the Cuban cultural and historical contours among which this bifurcation of the Beat and revolutionary paths took place is stymied by some of the same "presumptuousness" toward the communist Other for which he roundly criticizes U.S. opinion-makers of the day (p. 158). First, he leaves certain terminological ambiguities unchallenged.

Echoing Cuban author Gabriel Cabrera Infante's vitriolic anti-Castroism, Tietchen claims that "cosmopolitanism" had been classified as a cardinal sin in Cuba by mid-1961. While hostility to cultural currents from Paris, London, or the Beat capitals of San Francisco and New York certainly became evident in Cuban cultural policy as the 1960s progressed, this could be alternatively interpreted as an ideological salvo against perceived cultural imperialism, rather than a determined turn toward expressive autarky. Hence, while Greenwich Village gurus received a frosty welcome by the mid-1960s, writers and artists from the "non-aligned" world were received with enthusiasm as Cuba recalibrated its cultural compass southwards and eastwards. A year after Allen Ginsberg was unceremoniously expelled, for example, Cuba opened its borders to delegates from more than eighty countries as the "Tricontinental" conference infused Havana with a different kind of cosmopolitanism.

Second, Tietchen's portrayal of the summer of 1961 and the pronouncement of Castro's contentious *Words to the Intellectuals* as marking a cataclysmic schism in Cuba's cultural trajectory glosses over some critical historical nuances. His assertion that the formal alliance with the Soviet Union "effectively shut down Havana as the site of an open and improvised inter-culture" (p. 48) masks both the turbulence of Cuba's relations with the USSR throughout the 1960s and the stubborn survival of heterodox aesthetic visions well beyond the alleged demise of what Cabrera Infante called Cuba's fleeting "cultural renaissance" (in Tietchen, p. 10).¹

Third, and perhaps critically, Tietchen (and the Beat writers he follows) simply cannot see eye to ideological eye with Castro and the revolutionary regime. Whereas Tietchen describes Cuba as only "momentarily open to a host of politically progressive intellectuals" (p. 1), the early 1960s' literacy campaign, urban housing and land reforms, nationalization of key economic sectors, and the ever-present mass mobilization that animated many of these projects could be perceived as placing the "progressive" mantle firmly on the Cuban Revolution's shoulders.

Tietchen and the Beats simply don't share the same "revolutionary" paradigms with Castro and his acolytes. The writers from the United States (and many of their Cuban counterparts) advocate revolution through committed cultural insurgency that deploys the "stranger" and more spontaneous relations between human communities to dissolve the "prosaic nature of conventional (and reified) political realities" they see blighting the geo-politically bipo-

1. Although the 1961 closure of the Cabrera Infante-edited cultural supplement *Lunes de Revolución* can almost certainly be attributed to cultural Machiavellianism, the ideological idiosyncrasies of later literary and filmic projects such as Edmundo Desnoes's *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1965), Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's *Muerte de un burócrata* (1966), and José Lezama Lima's *Paradiso* (1966) belie Tietchen's description of Cuba's ferrous cultural policy post-1961.

lar world (p. 43). The insular revolutionary idiom is perhaps more “rational” (in the C. Wright Mills’s sense), or at least more pragmatic as the guerrillas in government sought to erode the cognitive frontier between *nación* and *Revolución* to thus conquer an idiosyncratic interstice amid capitalism, communism, and one hundred years of radical Cuban nationalism: “First and foremost comes the Revolution itself,” said Castro in his 1961 *Words* to anxious intellectuals. “Only later will we concern ourselves with other matters.”

Without sensitivity to this mutual misapprehension, and without cognizance of cultural movements as “sites of intense rhetorical or argumentative activity” (p. 10), the history of the Beats in Havana and Havana in the Beats can perhaps be only partially understood.

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The Devil in the Details: Cuban Antislavery Narrative in the Postmodern Age. CLAUDETTE M. WILLIAMS. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2010. x + 206 pp. (Paper US\$ 18.00)

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In *The Devil in the Details*, Claudette M. Williams invokes “a nuanced notion of antislavery” to “breathe new life” into nineteenth-century works of fiction. She specifically focuses on works of fiction published before the abolition of slavery in Cuba in 1886 that present antislavery sentiment as “a political instrument.” As articulated in the introduction, she proposes alternative ways of thinking about and understanding the works covered. While the book is divided into chapters that may be read independently, major themes

targeted for analysis include the representation of slave/slave owner relations and slave resistance.

The selected works include lesser-known as well as well-established texts: Félix Tanco y Bosniel's *Petrona y Rosalía* (1838), Anselmo Suárez y Romero's *Francisco* (1839), Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab* (1841), Francisco Calcagno's *Romualdo, uno de tantos* (1869), Antonio Zambrana's *El Negro Francisco* (1875), and Cirilo Villaverde's *Cecilia Valdés* (1882). With the exception of *Sab*, each of these works originally appeared in print under the influence of literary critic Domingo del Monte in a climate of strict censorship that forced authors to circulate manuscripts within their literary circles. Williams's stated objective is to introduce critical insights interpreted by means of a postmodern optic to expand on previous readings of these antislavery narratives.

Since Anselmo y Suárez's *Francisco* did not pass the censor in 1839, the novel did not actually appear in print until 1880. Williams offers an in-depth character analysis of *Francisco*, providing keen insights on the complexity of Suárez's vision for the manifestations of slave resistance. She examines how complicity and resistance operate in slave societies despite the apparent acquiescence of slaves to dominance by the slave owners. The steady undercurrent of slave rebellion in the novel includes clandestine meetings between the protagonists, vengeful thoughts, singing in solidarity, and other controlled forms of resistance, revealing the work's "non-radical subversion" (p. 54). References to various survival strategies, including the retention of African cultural practices and the consciousness of an African homeland, highlight the role of identity in achieving endurance and slave resistance.

While the chapters on *Sab* and *Petrona y Rosalía* examine racial relationships at some length, they offer scant treatment of slave resistance. Avellaneda's abolitionist work, *Sab*, written by the sole female author in the group, and banned in Cuba, merits particular attention. Despite Williams's extensive psychological analysis of the romanticized protagonists, the anti-slavery theme receives less emphasis. She argues that the antislavery message is undermined by Avellaneda's feminist stance, "consigning the issue of slavery to a lower place on the novel's ideological agenda" (p. 89). Williams acknowledges, furthermore, that *Sab*'s hybridity and role as an overseer contribute to the novel's complexity, rendering the theme of slave resistance problematic. In some respects, *Sab*'s ambivalent voice echoes that of Avellaneda herself who simultaneously assumed the roles of maverick and conformist. Williams concludes that Avellaneda's vision of the slaves' resistance represents a continuation of the anticolonial struggle of Cuba's indigenous population.

Slave resistance appears center stage in Calcagno's seldom-studied short work of fiction, *Romualdo*. Following thirty years of suffering brutality under bondage, the proud Romualdo remains defiant and flees the plantation.

Calcagno's work is unique for its treatment of the oppressive Cuban measures that provoke specific resistance strategies. Appearing as focal points of the narrative are *plagio* – the corrupt practice of kidnapping and selling emancipated slaves – and the courageous agency that led to the creation of *marronage* – where slaves found refuge, formed communities, and fought oppression to the death. As Williams reminds the reader, Calcagno's gradualist approach to abolition was espoused by liberal-minded Cuban opinion, including members of the Del Monte *tertulia*. (A notable exception was the abolitionist Richard Madden, the first Superintendent of Liberated Africans, whose efforts to eradicate the illegal slave trade during the period 1836-1839 led to the rescue of hundreds of transported Africans from a life of slavery in Cuba.)

Williams suggests that Zambrana's *El Negro Francisco* yields new meanings when viewed as a parodic adaptation of Suárez's *Francisco*. Noting the intertextual relationship between the two novels, she reminds the reader that Zambrana, "*el nuevo historiador*" (the new storyteller), claimed to have been so moved by his first reading of Suárez's work as a sixteen-year-old that he became a committed abolitionist. Written while in exile in Santiago de Chile during the decade-long war for Cuban independence (1868-1878), *El Negro Francisco* takes the original work as a point of departure to represent Cuban slave reality four decades later. Rather than portraying his protagonist as *bozal* (a recently transported slave), Zambrana's Francisco is characterized as a "*negro de nación*" (a native African) whose sense of identity ensures his resistance. Among the insights that set Zambrana's work apart are the slaves' expressions of discontent that prompt them to contemplate a legal change of masters and Francisco's ability to awaken in the beautiful *mulata* house slave Camila a consciousness of her ancestral connections. This type of agency appears as an empowering spirit that creates solidarity in the face of extreme oppression and, in the latter case for Williams, a "potent antidote for [Camila's] alienation from Africa" (p. 129).

Concluding with *Cecilia Valdés*, Williams furnishes more nuanced insights to uncover motifs that expand on the antislavery theme. Informed by a postcolonial reading, she views María de Regla – the embodiment of slave resistance who defiantly nurses two babies – and the rebel slaves on the sugar plantation who choose the ultimate option, as exercising agency to disrupt the power relationship. Further, she expounds on some of the myriad ways in which slaves undermine and circumvent their enslavers' authority.

Given the sustained interest in nineteenth-century antislavery narratives, *The Devil in the Details* is a timely addition to the scholarship on this subject. Williams's analysis of the complexity of slave society's interrelationships should generate renewed critical readings of this important body of literature.

Screening Cuba: Film Criticism as Political Performance during the Cold War. HECTOR AMAYA. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010. xxiii + 222 pp. (Paper US\$ 30.00)

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In fall 2010, director Esteban Insausti was in Venezuela “blowing up” his first feature – that is, transferring *Larga Distancia* from digital format onto celluloid for 35-millimeter projection. With the film’s reliance on new technologies for its creation, the theme of emigration driving the narrative, a New York-based Cuban playing the lead role, coproduction as the financing mechanism, and a website marketing the work, this project demonstrates the very “long distance” that Cuban revolutionary filmmaking has come over the past half century.

Film has been a key arbiter of Cuban revolutionary identity; the Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC) was “born” with the Revolution, created as it was in the second decree of the new government in 1960. It is through the medium of cinema that notions of citizenship have been defined and promoted, that relationships to the state have been negotiated, and that alliances have been forged. The cultural project that began a half-century ago, wielding a camera to help construct a new nation, has continued into the present – but with significant changes. A series of new books has expanded the information available on this nation’s rich film tradition.

In Cuba, Ediciones ICAIC has marked the national film institute’s fiftieth anniversary with numerous monographs and edited volumes. In *Lágrimas en la lluvia* (2008), the late Rufo Caballero presents two decades’ worth of his “thinking about film” – works from Cuba as well as from other parts of the world. In *Conversaciones al lado de Cinecittá* (2009), Arturo Sotto compiles a series of interviews with film directors, producers, editors, scriptwriters and sound specialists. In *Romper la tensión del arco: Movimiento Cubano de cine documental*, Jorge Luis Sánchez tracks documentary production in Cuba during the twentieth century, with special attention devoted to the 1960s. In *Conquistando la utopía: El ICAIC y la revolución 50 años después* (2010), nine film professionals share their reflections on relevant topics including animation (Mario Masvidal), women’s films (Danae C. Dieguez), and polemical works (Sandra del Valle). In *Ojeada al cine cubano*, Pedro R. Noa Romero compiles film essays and reviews by the prolific Cuban film critic,

José Manuel Valdés-Rodríguez. And in *Los cien caminos del cine cubano*, Marta Díaz and Joel del Río examine the development of cinema in their country from its origins to the present, and append a comprehensive encyclopedia of Cuban films, most with lists of prizes and awards. Cuban cinema is framed within the regional movement of New Latin American Cinema in *Latitudes del margen* (Joel del Río and María Caridad Cumaná, Ediciones ICAIC, 2008); pioneers of the island's cinema are treated in *Entre el vivir y el soñar* (Arturo Agramonte and Luciano Castillo, 2008); and a series of blog posts are compiled in *Bloguerías* (Juan Antonio García Borrero, Editorial Acaña, 2009). Taken together, these volumes provide film scholars and aficionados with exceedingly useful information about the ways in which films have been made, circulated, and critiqued in Cuba.

In recent years, university presses in the United States have also introduced more titles related to this island's film and media. Among them are *Digital Dilemmas: The State, the Individual, and Digital Media in Cuba* by Cristina Venegas (Rutgers University Press, 2010), *Cuba Represent!: Cuban Arts, State Power, and the Making of New Revolutionary Cultures* by Sujatha Fernandes (Duke University Press, 2006), and *On Location in Cuba: Street Filmmaking during Times of Transition* by Ann Marie Stock (University of North Carolina Press, 2009). Hector Amaya's study, *Screening Cuba*, joins this growing body of work.

Whereas many of the resources already mentioned are devoted to charting the history of film production, capturing the memories of the creators, or providing analysis of the film texts, *Screening Cuba* sets out to compare the critical reception of select Cuban films at home and in the United States from the late 1950s into the 1980s. Before moving to his case studies of four works that have become "classics" of Cuba's revolutionary cinema – *Memories of Underdevelopment*, *Lucia*, *One Way or Another*, *Portrait of Teresa* – Amaya provides a comprehensive review of the respective "cultural fields" in Cuba and the United States during the cold war era. Against this backdrop, he demonstrates how critics framed these films according to their own political cultures during this time. Amaya reveals that reviews, essays, and interpretations from Cuba consistently emphasize the promises of the Revolution, whereas comparable texts from the United States celebrate the films' resistance to U.S. hegemony and promotion of progressive values. His findings reiterate the words of the renowned Cuban filmmaker, Fernando Pérez, who has observed that "*No vemos las cosas como son, sino como somos*" ("We don't see things the way they are but rather the way we are"). In probing the political and politicized nature of film criticism, *Screening Cuba* makes a meaningful contribution to media reception studies. In addition, it will certainly be of interest to scholars of Cuban revolutionary culture and film.

Perceptions of Cuba: Canadian and American Policies in Comparative Perspective. LANA WYLIE. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010. xii + 178 pp. (Paper US\$ 22.95)

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It is common knowledge that marriages and family reunions have a better chance of remaining harmonious if the subjects of politics and religion are simply avoided. Discussions about beliefs, self-identity, ultimate purpose, and morality usually trigger strong emotional reactions and camps quickly become polarized and entrenched – poor conditions for polite dinner conversation. Oddly enough, political scientists seem to forget this in their search for academically rigorous, objective, scientific explanations of historical and current events.

Lana Wiley's short book is a refreshing and insightful exploration of how and why the United States and Canada, two countries with so much in common, can have such vastly different policies toward the same country – Cuba. She couches the well-accepted *realpolitik* explanations of how these differences came to be in the not so real context of the processes of ideation, perception, and identity. Her analysis exposes the *soft belly* of the so-called *hard facts*.

Wiley provides a synopsis of the historical development of U.S.-Cuban and Canadian-Cuban diplomatic and commercial relations with a focus on the development of divergent policy platforms toward the Castro regimes (Fidel and subsequently Raúl) from 1959 to 2010. While the United States chose isolation, Canada chose engagement. Wylie itemizes the often heard explanations of how these differences came to be. In the case of the United States, the policy of isolation was rationalized during the cold war era as a non-military response to concerns over Cuba as a national security threat (not completely unfounded given the missile crisis). Though Cuba is no longer a real threat to the United States, this vestigial and ineffectual policy remains more or less unchanged. Clinton codified it, G.W. Bush hardened it, and Obama softened it. The reason given for the continuation of this hard-line policy of isolation is that it is the policy advocated by the small but

politically powerful Cuban-American community in Florida, an important “swing” state in U.S. electoral math.

In contrast, the Canadian policy of engagement is usually explained as the result of the search for commercial competitive advantage. U.S. commercial competition is relatively absent (though Cuba buys most of its food from the United States). Wiley also shows that despite advocating very different policy means, the United States and Canada share similar policy goals – a democratic and relatively market-oriented Cuba.

Wylie concurs with scholars and policy analysts who argue that these reasons for policy divergence have a great deal of merit. However, she is willing to take one further step by asking why and how they come about. In answering these questions, she delves into psychological and epistemological modes of inquiry by using a constructivist approach. She successfully argues that the policies are different because the two countries have different identities and perceptions. In her words: “though there is not a hard-and-fast line of causality between identity, a single perception, and a certain policy outcome, patterns of perceptions reinforce certain policy choices over others ... This pattern becomes the default” (p. 118).

Wylie points to the “core self image of exceptionalism” (p. 20) in the United States, a nation economically, morally, and militarily superior with a missionary responsibility over the fate of other “less fortunate” countries. For the United States, revolutionary Cuba is the ultimate “other” – the antithesis of its democratic and pro-market values, but living in its own backyard (geographically and politically, given annexation movements in both countries). In contrast, Wylie argues that anti-Castro Cuban Americans have managed to gain unprecedented political power by projecting (and believing in) an image of themselves as cold war warriors close to the heart of American political self-image.

Wylie argues that Canadians see themselves as good international citizens committed to moderation, compromise, social justice, and the rule of law. Canada is a peacekeeping nation that promotes dialogue, respect for sovereignty, and multi-lateral approaches. Moreover, for Canada, the “other” is not Cuba, but rather, the United States. Canadians abroad are quick to point out that they are not American and, at home, they resent any action that is perceived as American bullying. Thus, Cuba’s defiance of U.S. bullying is close to the Canadian heart.

Within this context, Wiley examines the U.S. and Canadian responses to different events. For example, she recounts the shooting down of the exile-piloted “Brothers to the Rescue” planes by Cuba’s air force. This event forced President Clinton into signing the Cuban exile-supported Helms-Burton Law. In Canada, the shooting down of civilian aircraft was deplored, but at the same time Cuba’s claim that it was defending its air space seemed a reasonable cause of concern for the Cuban state, though an unfortunate

policy response. Canadian national outcry focused instead on outrage over the illegal and extra-territorial nature of Helms-Burton.

Fortunately, as Wylie reminds us, social constructs such as national identity are plastic, malleable, and impermanent. They change and they evolve. She suggests that change in both U.S. policy toward Cuba and Cuban policy toward the United States is possible and that policy is indeed changing. In contrast, Canadian policy has remained relatively stable despite the more U.S.-leaning policies toward Cuba adopted by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Wisely, Wylie also warns that these arguments for change in the U.S.-Cuban impasse must address the link between identity and foreign policy in both countries. Moreover, it must do so by changing the way that people connect these two concepts; protection of U.S. values does not equal isolation of Cuba. Exactly how these ideational changes will take place remains uncertain and very challenging. Will it take a game-changing major event – the sudden death of Fidel and/or Raúl Castro? Or will the slow progression of new perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes eventually erode conceptual barriers?

This book has one gap. Cubans' sense of identity, self-image, and perceptions are not adequately examined. How does Cuba's own exceptionalism entrench anti-U.S. sentiment in Cuba, as well as anti-Castro/pro-U.S. sentiment in the exile community? What do members of the small Canadian Cuban exile community think and why do they seem so uninterested in affecting Canadian policy toward the island? What are Cubans' perceptions of their relationship with the United States and Canada? How has history affected Cubans' perceptions of them? The United States has had an unusually high level of involvement in Cuba that has included annexationist movements in both countries, including the U.S. invasion – the so-called Spanish-American War and the Bay of Pigs. On the other hand, Canadian involvement has been minimal, and based on an ethos of solidarity with the revolutionary cause, and since the mid-1990s, on commercial interests and tourism.

This book is an easy to read, well-informed, and insightful exploration of how policy is constructed – and what might be required to change it – with many possible scholarly spin-offs and practical policy applications.

Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow. FRANK ANDRE GURIDY. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. xiv + 270 pp. (Paper US\$ 22.95)

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The complicated experience of Afro-Latinos in the United States is a long neglected topic that has been receiving increased scholarly attention. An African face with a Spanish accent provokes a quandary, a rip in the seam of racial assignment during the Jim Crow era and beyond. Where in the hierarchy of color and nationality are persons of such identity measured? Do burdens of racism compound burdens of xenophobia, or do ambiguities transgress categories and open spaces for advantage? What national similarities and differences are there in the hermeneutics of race, color, and culture, and how do these circumstances affect interaction and collaboration? This encounter raises questions that are important for larger issues of social identity and community formation, and for sorting out the complex and ever ramifying strands of the African diaspora. Frank Guridy's *Forging Diaspora* makes a valuable contribution to this emergent line of inquiry.

Guridy sets out to illuminate "the essence of diaspora-making by following historical actors as they move across borders" (p. 14). Drawing on diverse archival sources in the United States and Cuba, especially the rich holdings of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, he sketches multi-generational interactions between African Americans and Afro-Cubans and ferrets out the international channels and linkages that developed between individuals with common interests, shared problems, and mutual appreciation for each others' cultural achievements. The time frame begins in the aftermath of the so-called Spanish American War in 1898 and ends with the Cuban Revolution of 1959 (with a brief epilogue from contemporary Cuba). He examines experiences and beliefs of elite actors in both nations, focusing on four specific outcroppings of direct and sustained interaction. In what he describes as "hidden histories" he unfolds events and personalities involved in four scenarios set roughly in sequence: Afro-Cuban students who attended Tuskegee Institute in the early years of the twentieth century; Cuban involvement in the Marcus Garvey UNIA movement during the 1910s and 1920s; Afro-Cuban-American literary and musical cross-currents in Harlem and Havana in the 1920s and 1930s; and the emergence of institutionalized networks of elite relationships

in the post-World War II period, following improvised channels of Jim Crow tourism. Castro's rise to power ironically diminished these connections with the U.S. embargo on travel, just as the Civil Rights movement in the United States was building new momentum. His concern with elite individuals allows him to portray the agency of individual actors by focusing on those who had demonstrable influence or access to opportunities.

The Tuskegee Institute, a well-known landmark in African American history, is the subject of Chapter 1. In the early years of the Cuban Republic, when Afro-Cubans were struggling to get a foothold in the economy, Tuskegee offered a relatively proximal destination for Cubans seeking skills. The prestige of Booker T. Washington added to the lure. Juan Gualberto Gómez, a leading Afro-Cuban writer and activist, was instrumental in recruiting a handful of Cuban students who enrolled in Tuskegee. The project met with little success. Guridy's conclusion is drawn from letters, mostly of complaint, by Cuban students who apparently did not adapt well to the demands of the place.

Chapter 2, "Enacting Diaspora in the Garvey Movement," which reconstructs involvement by Afro-Cubans in the UNIA, is primarily a description of people and events at the intersection of Cubans and the UNIA. The Afro-Cuban elite club, Atenas, is the focus of much of this narrative, with some discussion of differences in racial perceptions of Cubans compared with other nations, and an emphasis on practice and "performance" within the UNIA organization. West Indian migrants in Cuba, whose grievances were not quashed by the mythic Cuban "racial democracy," appear to have been the majority of supporters, but several high-profile Afro-Cubans were also involved. There is an interesting, if incomplete, discussion of the contradictions between entrepreneurship, which Cuban elites could endorse, and racial consciousness, which was much less comfortable for them.

The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s coincided with *afrocubanismo* (an upsurge in popularity of Afro-Cuban music, art, dance, and poetry), the subject of Chapter 3. Relationships forged by Langston Hughes with Afro-Cuban writers and musical performers, especially poet Nicolás Guillén, form the central theme. Guridy explores cultural contradictions in primitivism, the commercialization of leisure and tourism, and the shifting tone and urgency of their work with the deepening depression and increased racial tensions in both Cuba and the United States.

The final chapter examines the vicissitudes and ingenuity involved in travel between the United States and Cuba during the Jim Crow era. This perspective serves as a framework for discussing the development of myriad professional, political, and cultural ties between elite African Americans and Afro-Cubans in the period after World War II. A growing, although still tiny, African American upper middle class developed a circuit of pleasure travel, cultural education, and political collaborations. Some of the nodal personalities, including second-generation Afro-Cuban immigrants from Florida, are detailed.

A ten-page epilogue completes the volume. In a captivating narrative, Guridy recounts scenes from a recent trip to Cuba, passing by the now deserted Club Atenas and spending evenings with elderly Cuban musicologists who reminisce about the persons and times portrayed in Chapter 3. Although there is some interweaving of the themes, personalities, and issues among the chapters, there is a lack of overall conclusions or analysis. This book will be of most value to readers already familiar with the history of race in Cuba and elite African American actors and institutions.

The Irish in the Atlantic World. DAVID T. GLEESON (ed.). Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010. viii + 341 pp. (Cloth US\$ 69.95)

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David T. Gleeson deserves great credit for serving as academic editor of *The Irish in the Atlantic World*, which covers the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries. Conference proceedings are notoriously difficult to pull together. In addition, the agendas of the funding agencies behind the conferences often make it difficult to choose judiciously in any edited version. The present volume emanates from the 2007 conference of the College of Charleston's Program in the Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World. Gleeson, author of an excellent monograph on the Irish in the South, was employed by this program before receiving his present appointment at the University of Northumbria in England.

To apprehend the book's virtues, one first needs to do some window-cleaning. The articles on Father Mathew's Irish temperance crusade, on nineteenth-century Irish copper-mining, and on the Second Anglo-Boer War are interesting, but aside from bits of top-and-tail that refer vaguely to the Atlantic World, they are irrelevant to the book's central theme.

The bulk of the volume does indeed deal with the Atlantic World and, in many cases, with the character of the Irish in the southern United States who were part of that world. The fascinating thing here is an unspoken demarcation between two definitions of the Atlantic World: American imperial vs. world-view. The classic American imperial definition of the Atlantic World comes from Walter Lippman's masterful piece of World War II propaganda,

The US War Aims (1944) – a source not mentioned by any of the contributors. It postulated a single cultural imperium: “The national differences within the Atlantic region are variations within the same cultural tradition. For the Atlantic Community is the extension of Western or Latin Christendom from the Western Mediterranean into the whole basin of the Atlantic Ocean” (Lippman 1944:87). Not surprisingly, there were only two points that really counted in that imperium – Europe, including the British Isles, and the United States and its pre-revolutionary antecedents.

Within that imperial tradition, one finds some useful essays in this volume. Particularly impressive is Scott Spencer’s pioneering work on the way that Irish music migrated back and forth across the Atlantic in the early years of sound recording. This is front-edge work, and displays the rough-hewn quality that such research must necessarily have: Spencer works from disparate sources such as old recordings, oral and written interviews, and record catalogs to provide an entry into an emerging field. (He manages to do so without dealing with John McCormack, the meteor that almost blotted out the sun as far as Irish recordings were concerned.) Secondly, Lauren Onkey provides a satisfying and perceptive discussion of Van Morrison, especially his musical interaction with traditional American Blues well before his rock and roll period. Onkey’s essay has a set of subtle suggestions concerning how this interaction served as a prophylactic against Morrison’s getting lost in the sectarian subtext that blights so much Irish traditional music. And, thirdly, one admires Bernadette Whelan’s discussion of the “idea of America” – meaning the United States. She manages to show how pervasive, complex and often-contradictory concepts of America were, without losing the reader in the swirl. These three essays work nicely on their own terms and also as related entities. Note that they concern cultural matters of the twentieth century, a period when the secular culture of the Irish in the Atlantic World was indeed largely under U.S. domination. (The religious culture was an entirely different story.)

Against the definition of the Atlantic World as a U.S. imperium stands a second band of essays that present the Atlantic World as a wider and more historically diverse entity. It is a view that (for the Irish) included Newfoundland and British North America (the main receptors for pre-Famine Irish migration). In this view, the Caribbean in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was as important economically and socially as were the U.S. mainland colonies. And, finally, it potentially recognizes that for almost the entire twentieth century Great Britain was the country in the Atlantic World to which the Irish most frequently migrated and which was the social center of their world once they had left Ireland. (This latter point is sufficiently uncomfortable that none of the scholars deal with Great Britain with any directness.) The master-historian Donald M. MacRaild has the widest perspective in the volume. His discussion of “The Orange Atlantic” forcibly reminds readers that Protestantism is a consequential aspect of the Irish culture internationally, and

that from at least the late eighteenth century onwards, one cannot speak sensibly about Irish culture in North America unless one deals with British North America – especially what is now Ontario, which was proportionally the single most ethnically Irish jurisdiction in the entire English-speaking world.

Situated in a wide-lens view of the Atlantic world, the book's bravura article is Orla Power's examination of the movement of Irish-Catholic slaveholders of the Leeward Islands into St. Croix, the Danish West Indies. She mastered a variety of old sources, discovered a rich vein of new ones, and shows how the "Quadripartite Concern," a co-partnership of Irish planters, moved from the British Leewards into St. Croix. The willingness of the Irish Catholics to take part in the slave game is made clear, and Power's work ties tightly into recent studies by Nini Rodgers, which show that dealing with the slave islands was a major source of funding for the Catholic gentry's efforts to overcome the effects of the eighteenth-century Penal Laws. There is a fine book in the making here and one hopes that it will appear soon.

Other articles tie into the matter of the Irish, slavery, and, necessarily, Africa. Angela Murphy discusses the problematics of Irish nationalism and the slavery question in the South in the first half of the nineteenth century, and Susan M. Kroeg analyzes the way that West-Indian planters were worked into pre-Famine Irish novels as both characters and social archetypes. There are also two admirable pieces of local history – Richard MacMaster's essay on a band of Ulster migrants to the Carolinas in the eighteenth century, and Michael D. Thompson's sophisticated analysis of the interaction of Irish and black dockers in Charleston, amidst the economic confusions caused by yellow fever.

The Chinese in Latin America and the Caribbean. WALTON LOOK LAI & TAN CHEE-BENG (eds.). Leiden: Brill, 2010. 242 pp. (Paper US\$ 45.00)

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The Chinese in Latin America and the Caribbean is a welcome addition to the growing scholarship on Asians in the Americas. Before I discuss the collection itself, the nature and genealogy of this publication merit comment and context.

First, the co-editorship. The prominent scholar of Chinese and South Asians in the British Caribbean, UWI Professor Walton Look Lai, has teamed up with Hong Kong-based specialist of Chinese in Southeast Asia, Professor Tan Chee-Beng, thus linking the Asian diasporic scholarship of the Caribbean and Latin America with the long and deep tradition of the study of Chinese diasporas in *Nanyang*. The book is a selection from an issue of the *Journal of Overseas Chinese* (edited by Tan), which is published by the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO), founded in 2005 and based at the Singapore Chinese Heritage Centre.

Second, the use of “Chinese Overseas” (a literal translation of *huaqiao* – *qiao* signifying “bridge”) was first a political policy of the former Republic of China, now Taiwan. Sun Yat-sen, the “father” of the 1911 Revolution was himself a *huaqiao* who had traveled to the Americas to raise funds. After the 1949 Revolution and Chiang Kai-shek’s exile to Taiwan, Chiang’s Guomindang party dominated overseas Chinese communities throughout the Americas and elsewhere. But since the end of the cold war, the People’s Republic of China has increasingly found utility in this term, as has Singaporean President for life Lee Kwan Yew. The Chinese Heritage Centre, founded in 1995, commissioned Lyn Pan’s *Sons of the Yellow Emperor* (1994) as an inaugural framing of its Singaporean touting of a global overseas Chinese history.

Finally, it’s worth mentioning that the *Journal* is published by Brill in the Netherlands, which helps the Dutch continue their political-historical interests in a region where they held colonies and have consistently supported Nanyang Chinese overseas studies.

I offer these comments to highlight patterns in the globalization of scholarship that reveal both prior colonial linkages and cross-postcolonial studies; in the era of Anglo American and British academic domination, it is significant to access studies that do not *de facto* privilege U.S.- and British-centric world views. But I do so also to note the contestation over claims of what can be called “Chinese-ness,” or Americaness belonging among diasporic peoples in relation to the countries to which they migrated, either involuntarily or voluntarily. These epistemological issues are important to understand as I discuss the volume itself.

After a useful, but all too brief, introduction by Look Lai, the essays range historically from the early colonial period and “classic migrations” to the present. Edward Slack Jr.’s tantalizing essay about Chinese influence on New Spain and the pre-Opium Wars migration of Chinese is a valuable baseline framing of the early Manila-Acapulco “China trade,” the Asian peoples moving to colonial Mexico, and the emergence of the New World typology of “chino” or “indio chino,” a legal subcategory of the “indios” of the Americas. “Chinos” referred to a polyglot mix of East Asians, Southeast Asians, and South Asians. Slack has taken fragments from the Archivo General de Indias

in Seville and the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City and put them together in a manner useful for translocal, transcolonial studies.

Equally foundational are three essays on the development of Chino-Latino/a communities over moments of isolation and new migrations. French political geographer Isabelle Lausent-Herrera explores the way generations of single male Chinese indentured laborers caught between plantation exploitation, nineteenth-century Castilian discourses of racial degeneracy, *antichinismo* hostility, and twentieth-century Chinese nation-building movements devised ways of intermarrying, creating *injertos* and native-born Chinese Peruvian communities, while claiming Chinese-Chinese political and cultural allegiances. Her essay complicates simplistic one-way notions of assimilation and represents a people strategizing to survive and gaining limited but significant agency.

Anthropologist Paul B. Tjon Sie Fat examines the ethnic political struggles among the earlier Suriname “mud Ducks” (mainly Afro-Chinese), “Tang Ducks,” and “New Chinese” against Suriname’s spikes of anti-Chinese paranoia familiar to Chinese diasporic peoples and scholars. Tjon Sie Fat’s Chinese-Dutch Indonesian experience gives him a critical vantage, allowing him to offer useful translocal comparisons. Authentic “Chineseness” in *mestizaje* Latin American cultures is also what historian Kathleen López explores in her valuable essay on Cuban tourist revitalization efforts of Havana’s “*colonia China*” to promote a “Chinatown without Chinese” as part of a new PRC state-to-Cuban state relationship-building process. Ways in which these three distinctive postcolonial and nationally-bounded interracial dynamics might relate to each other is suggested in the essays by Look Lai, Hu-DeHart, and Robinson, though not explicitly framed as such.

Belizean scholar St. John Robinson takes up Lok Siu’s challenge for comparative analysis of Central America by offering a quick, preliminary overview. Look Lai provides a broader comparative perspective on the roles that both Chinese and South Asian migrations have played in the industrial capitalist relations of production in colonial core economies. And Evelyn Hu-DeHart, an esteemed activist scholar who was trained in Latin American studies and also bridges with U.S.-style Ethnic Studies, examines the overall pattern of *antichinismo* hence extending Alexander Saxton’s “indispensable enemy” question to the Americas writ large. She asks if diasporic Chinese have been consigned to a paradoxical subject position of “integrated and foreign,” first posed by Mexican scholar Nicolás Cárdenas García. Hu-DeHart raises a central question that demands further serious theoretical examination.

The collection testifies to the importance of this emerging field, exploring questions that move beyond parochial nationalist narratives, and contributes significantly to field-building and field-bridging. But all this for what larger, extra-academic purpose? As neoliberalism and privatization continue to reformulate public and private universities, academics are constantly

faced with the question of “so what”? This volume provides the seeds of a response. The interview by literary scholar Lisa Yun of Hong Kong-born, San Francisco-based historical novelist Ruthanne Lum McCunn reflects on the relationships of time and space, present and past, here and there. In this interview, McCunn and Yun engage with questions of the dialogics between the historical imagination, despite the problems of fragmented archival scantiness, and reasons why history matters.

For this field in development, there are several possible horizons in further epistemological and comparative work, and importantly in public engagement. Venezuelan anthropologist Fernando Coronil’s recent work extending the analysis of “the coloniality of power” to bring together studies extending Edward Said’s theory of European orientalism with the current era of neoliberalist globalization offers an important dialogue between scholars examining East/West axes of power and those exploring differentiation with global North/South questions of the Americas. Focusing on the formation of Occidentalism provides a fruitful nexus to understanding the diasporas and racial formations of Chinese and Asians in the Americas south.

Furthermore, recent scholarship focusing on the everyday and “structures of feeling” within critical theory, and ethnic, feminist, and queer studies offers the possibility of understanding the play of agency and power in any given locale and across locales. Yet, even when macro-theories such as these are conjoined, the challenge of what work it does for addressing ongoing issues of paranoia and scapegoating in realtime and realplace remain. Here publicly engaged scholarship and curated spaces for reflexive grassroots dialogue are necessary. Shouldn’t the people who are the subjects of this work become a part of the analysis, interpretation, and dialogue about their lives? Significantly, this volume moves us closer to that possibility.

Yet, in this age of extreme “free” market commodification, such historically engaged interventionist initiatives are less and less likely to be supported by state funding. What can academics, who are also under the knife of cutbacks, do in collaborating with community-based initiatives?

The Island of One People: An Account of the History of the Jews of Jamaica.
MARILYN DELEVANTE & ANTHONY ALBERGA. Kingston: Ian Randle,
2010. xv + 223 pp. (Paper US\$ 30.00)

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Jamaican Jewish history spans more than 350 years. Indeed, the Jews (or crypto-Jews under Spanish rule, 1509-1655) lived on the island before it was English and continue to play an active role there to this day. *The Island of One People* shows the extent to which they are one of the many peoples that have contributed to the contemporary Jamaican nation-state. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Jamaica's Jewish population was larger than the entire Jewish population of British Colonial North America. Long ago did we forget in North America that Jamaica (and to some extent Barbados) was the center of English-speaking American Jewry, not New York. For much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, New York and Philadelphia were cold, northerly backwaters that Jews passed over for sunny, and economically prosperous Kingston and Spanish Town. These British and Dutch Sephardic Jews were attracted to the burgeoning sugar cane trade like bees to honey, as well as to the mercantile-based economy that supported it.

The Island of One People, presently one of the few books on Jewish-Jamaican history in print, is valuable for those just getting acquainted with the heritage of Jews in Jamaica and the Caribbean. The book bears many similarities to Ernest Henriques de Souza's *Pictorial: Featuring Some Aspects of Jamaica's Jewry and His Community Activities* in both content and structure. Delevante and Alberga do acknowledge this work and the permissions given to them by Judy de Souza, Ernest's widow. From an academic perspective, *The Island of One People* takes on the feeling of an update to de Souza's *Pictorial*, filling in Jewish-Jamaican history since the early 1980s, as well as a few miscellaneous topics. The book is an impressive assortment of reproduced historic prints and photographs, though their reprint quality is disappointing. All of the images are grayscale and many are too small or grainy to allow readers to decipher the intricate details. Nonetheless, the impression of a rich material culture in Jewish Jamaica does come across.

While *The Island of One People* usefully takes on the approach of a national history for a specific ethnic minority group, what seems to be looked over is that Jamaica is a relatively small country. In other words this national

history is at the same time a local history. Very few primary sources are used and there is an overly heavy reliance on several secondary sources. This is disappointing when one considers that the authors, as well as many of the major archives in the country, are all located in Kingston. The book's 223 pages are divided into 29 chapters – with the average chapter just over seven pages – making the narrative choppy. Most of the first 16 chapters focus on the island's Jewish history as a whole, the synagogues and other communal institutions, and the four past and current significant communities; Kingston, Spanish Town, Montego Bay, and Port Royal. Chapters 17-26 provide a summary history and genealogy of significant Jewish-Jamaican individuals, such as notable Rabbis and families (e.g., Lindo, deLisser, Myers, deCordovas, Ashenheim, Henriques, Matalon, and Albergas). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most of Jamaica's early influential families were of Sephardic-Iberian origin, with Ashkenazim from Central and Eastern Europe settling in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The book's final three chapters delve into the history of the island's Jewish school, Hillel Academy; a biographical overview of past historians on Jewish-Jamaican history since 1941; and population statistics on Jamaica and Jews between 1700 and 2002. Though Jamaica's Jews represent an old community, the authors believe that their future will not be as good as it was during the halcyon days of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Other than this finding a concluding chapter explaining what new things have been learned from this research is lacking.

In the preface Delevante and Albergas describe their book as “a celebration and remembering. Tribute must be paid to those who went before and took the time to document some of our history” (p. ix). This book does celebrate, remember, and pay tribute to the past so that it is not forgotten, which is a noble goal. However, *The Island of One People* appears to have been an overly ambitious research project for the authors. It is not the much-needed contribution to scholarship on Jamaica's Jewish history that we have been waiting for. An investigation of Jamaican-Jewish history with an emphasis on primary source usage and analysis has yet to be written. Nonetheless, Delevante and Albergas are successful in providing access to an aspect of Jewish history that is often a footnote in longer narratives. For those with Jewish-Jamaican ancestry, their book can be a valuable resource for researching one's family history. A book of this kind is also very valuable for the lay audience or those just beginning their studies; however, the intellectual growth beyond what was already known by most scholars of Caribbean Jewish history is minimal.

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Creole Jews: Negotiating Community in Colonial Suriname. WIEKE VINK. Leiden, the Netherlands: KITLV Press, 2010. xiv + 306 pp. (Paper €34.90)

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Suriname is home to the oldest Jewish community in the greater Caribbean, where it shares the distinction of longevity with the Jews of Curaçao. Its founding members arrived in the 1650s, primarily from the Iberian Peninsula via northwestern Europe, seeking economic opportunity in an environment where Judaism was a legal religion and its adherents were protected and privileged, although barred from full equality. They and their descendants exemplify a colonial American elite whose group boundaries continually shifted, and who became increasingly nativized through the generations, both culturally and ascriptively, without losing their original appellation.

Creole Jews: Negotiating Community in Colonial Suriname is a slight revision of a doctoral dissertation of the same name, completed in 2008 in the Faculty of History and Arts at Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. Wieke Vink tells the story of leaders and laymen (the two were not always mutually exclusive) staking out communal boundaries in a slave society where Jewish belonging, largely defined by race, shifted to a halakhic understanding in the mid-nineteenth century, following the loss of Jewish communal autonomy in 1825 and intensifying ties with the Jewish community of the Dutch metropolis. Vink argues that Suriname's Jews maintained an unstable relationship with whiteness. Although the community was legally classified as white by ruling elites, Jewishness set it apart from Christian whites, while its legal status and early roots in the colony secured its membership in the slave-owning class. This complicated the position of Jews relative to creolization, which Vink defines as a variegated process of cultural change specific to New World slavery, masterhood, and coloniality (p. 6). Their position was further imbricated by the communal inclusion of Eurafican Jews who, under specific conditions, could secure white status for their grandchildren. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as the largest remaining group of local whites, Suriname's Jews had come to be identified with the colony's Christian ruling elite, the very people who had long excluded Jews from full civil and political rights. Ironically, this process of "indigenization," which Vink seems to use synonymously with creolization, coincided with colonial reports that classified Jews, together with Afro-Surinamese, as natives.

Creole Jews is a pointillistic study. It is not a systematic survey that exhaustively or evenly proceeds through the ages, but rather a thematic overview that relies on “case studies” and jumps, sometimes joltingly, forward in time. Vink takes into account developments in the late seventeenth through early nineteenth centuries, but her main focus is on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her staccato approach and thin archival evidence mean the omission of incremental details essential to explaining and nuancing broad historical processes, such as the struggle for equal ritual and burial rights among Eurafrican Jews, or language shift among Jews of Portuguese and Spanish ancestry. To illustrate her point about linguistic creolization, Vink mentions the protocols of two Jewish notaries (pp. 63-64) and invents a “fictitious Portuguese Jewish female” living in the eighteenth century on a plantation who speaks only Sranan Tongo, the colony’s Creole (p. 262). Why the need to invent this “Ribca de Abraham Fernandes,” given the richness of the archives? In fact, most eighteenth-century Eurafrican Jews who filed wills with the Dutch colonial government dictated their last wishes in either Dutch or Portuguese, an *a fortiori* argument against creolization.³

These lacunae, perhaps unavoidable given the paucity of researchers in the field, do not detract from what is a confident and compelling account. Vink’s portrait of Surinamese Jewish creolization is a captivating counternarrative to the “modernization,” emancipation, and secularization of Europe’s Jews, one that invites historians of the Jewish past to unhinge Jewish modernity from its European focus. It also implicitly poses broader, comparative questions regarding the struggle for equal civil and political rights as experienced by white Jews and gentile Eurafricans. These comparative questions are especially relevant for Suriname, where the categories of Jews and Eurafricans overlapped conspicuously. In demonstrating the relevance of Surinamese Jews to broader themes of Caribbean history, something her scholarly predecessors Robert Cohen (1991) and Jonathan Schorsch (2004) did not do, Vink breaks new scholarly ground.

Vink’s narrative should stimulate lively debate about the utility of various concepts and interpretations. One wonders, for example, if “creolization” as a way to describe colonial acculturation or cultural transformation exoticizes Suriname’s Jewish community as uniquely permeable. Also open to discussion is the idea of a “global Jewish diaspora” (p. 101) that served as a counterpoint to Surinamese Jews as they “creolized,” and Vink’s suggestion that the Jewishness of her subjects, rather than their whiteness, was what destabilized their social position. Vink’s conclusion that High German Jews (Ashkenazim) were less color conscious than Portuguese Jews (Sephardim) does not explain why the former rescinded discriminatory regulations against Eurafricans almost two decades later than Sephardim.

3. Nationaal Archief Nederland, Suriname Oud Notarieel Archief, available wills dating from 1716-1799.

The salient challenge to this research is not so much the *lack*, but rather the sheer *abundance* of archival material that legibly survives, mainly in the Netherlands. Neither the prodigious records of Suriname's Jews, nor those kept by the colonial and municipal governments, have been systematically mined, with or without the theme of Jewish history in mind. *Creole Jews* persuasively and evocatively demonstrates that these archives – and the book's protagonists – are eminently worthy of excavating and pondering.

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Only West Indians: Creole Nationalism in the British West Indies. F.S.J. LEDGISTER. Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2010. 196 pp. (Paper US\$ 21.95)

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Only West Indians is aimed at determining the factors that shape Creole nationalism. Secondly, it addresses the issues of identity during colonialism and in the postcolonial era. F.S.J. Ledgister delves into selected aspects of British and Caribbean historiography to compare and assess the development and evolution of Creole nationalism in the British West Indies. He contends that during colonialism Creole nationalism was “a Caribbean form of European liberal nationalism; one that takes into account both the European origin of dominant institutions and the African origin of the dominated mass” (p. 25).

The difficulty of devising suitable definitions of “creolization,” “creole society,” and “Creole nationalism” is explored in the first chapter. This includes the examination of the views of scholars and advocates of Creole nationalism such as Percy Hintzen, Nigel Bolland, Deborah Thomas, and Don Robotham. Ledgister and others limit Creole nationalism to the intro-

duction of enslaved peoples from Africa into the Caribbean. A question that he did not consider is: Did the earlier interaction of Europeans with the indigenous peoples constitute a form of Creole nationalism?

Chapter 2 “Racist Rantings, Travellers’ Tales, and a Creole Counterblast” deals with the impact on the British West Indies of racist ideas and writings by men such as James Froude, Thomas Carlyle, and Charles Kingsley. The caustic responses of West Indians to such biased writings provide the foundation of Creole nationalism.

Chapters 3 and 5 focus on two influential personalities from Trinidad and Tobago – C.L.R. James and Eric Williams. Both men helped shape Creole nationalism in the post-World War II era in the Caribbean and abroad. Ledgister argues that James’s pamphlet, *The Case for West Indian Self-Government*, is a major contribution to West Indian political thought. Furthermore, the publication is assessed as a forerunner of Creole nationalism which would subsequently emerge in the British Caribbean. Likewise, the academic and political input of Eric Williams is gauged as having a major influence on the growth of nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago. Two subsections of the chapter on Williams, “Founding a Free State” and “The Democratic Nation-State,” demonstrate the making of a Creole nation.

Chapter 4, “Norman Manley: The Dutiful Intellectual,” is dedicated to one of Jamaica’s iconic politicians who appreciated the link of nationalism with democracy, creativity, and liberty. For some readers it would be difficult to label Manley a Creole nationalist. This is due to his philosophy of democratic socialism, his work with the West Indian federation, and his pronouncement in 1957 that Jamaica was a multiracial society.

In the final chapter, “Creole Dilemma, Creole Opportunity,” Ledgister argues that Creole nationalism constituted “a progressive movement which sought to revolutionize the political structure of the West Indies by bringing to power the people of the West Indies via their elected representatives in either a single West Indian state or a group of West Indian states” (p. 151).

It was an oversight not to consider adequately the status and contributions of the Indo-Caribbean and ethnic minorities (such as the Syrians, Chinese, and Portuguese) within the framework of Creole nationalism. Ledgister briefly mentions these groups in Trinidad and Tobago (pp. 121, 142), but fails to properly situate them within a Caribbean context.

A major shortcoming of *Only West Indians* is the focus on two nations (Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago), to the neglect of the Creole nationalism in other British West Indian territories. Readers would wonder about the contributions of politicians and intellectuals from St. Vincent, St. Kitts, Barbados, British Honduras, and Grenada to the development of Creole nationalism.

That said, *Only West Indians* is written in a coherent style and would be a useful introductory book for readers desiring to learn about the interaction of colonialism, politicians, and intellectuals in the emergence and growth of Creole nationalism in selected British West Indian colonies.

Cultural DNA: Gender at the Root of Everyday Life in Rural Jamaica.
DIANA J. FOX. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2010. xxi + 252 pp. (Paper US\$ 35.00)

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This book is a feminist ethnography of the rural black Jamaican gender system based on fieldwork in Frankfield, Clarendon Parish. Its central theme is that “gender is to culture as deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is to biological life” (p. x), with similar paired features of “longevity-mutability and uniqueness-collectivity” (p. xv). After a preface and acknowledgements, Chapter 1 describes the fieldwork and contribution “to the literature on gender in the Caribbean region” (p. xvii). Chapter 2 presents views of gender in the island, parish, and community. Chapter 3 elaborates the gendered history of Frankfield. Chapter 4 interprets the gender system, including dancehall culture. Chapter 5 stories gender with personal narratives; this chapter, where rural Jamaicans speak for themselves, is the strength of the book. Chapter 6 reviews applied anthropological projects on HIV/AIDS involving Diana Fox and her students. Chapter 7 reaffirms the relevance of the DNA metaphor to the rural Jamaican gender system as framed by the work of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies, in which Fox held a Fulbright fellowship.

Despite its critique of ethnographic authority, the book seems overly embedded in the identity of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies. In addition, Fox ignores important themes central to gender in rural Jamaica that are also significant to Caribbean anthropology.

Drawing on the work of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, Fox rightly states that “The general attributes of a gender system” include “roles surrounding marriage and kinship” (p. 216). However, in her three-page section on this theme she states (p. 112) that “Both for common-law and married relationships a system of bilateral kinship exists, through which children’s descent is reckoned through both parents. Besson (1998:138) also points out that ‘serial polyandry’ and ‘serial polygyny’ (sequential husbands and wives) are common practices.” However, my research (which does not use the Eurocentric concept of “common-law marriage” for Caribbean consensual cohabitation) distinguishes bilateral kinship from cognatic descent. Bilateral kinship refers to an ephemeral personal network of relatives on both parental

sides, whereas cognatic descent describes enduring gendered lineages often embedded in “family lands,” cultural sites of identity at the heart of Jamaican rural communities that include migrants overseas (Besson 1998, 2002). Yet despite a passing reference (p. 150) to burial in the yard (a significant feature of family land), Fox makes no mention of these lineages. These family lines are rooted in the cultural resistance of the enslaved, who created customary land-holding kin groups traced through both genders opposing slavery and the plantation system (based on primogeniture) which undermined their gendered personhood. These lineages both resembled and differed from West and Central African unilineal descent groups, maximizing forbidden kinship lines and scarce land rights in the Caribbean context. These creole lineages have both endured and further mutated with transnational migration.

Fox’s definition of “fictive kin,” discussed with the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, as “the anthropological term for the integration of the anthropologist into a kin network in the course of doing fieldwork” (p. 220 n.5) overlooks the wider anthropological meaning of this concept and the importance of the fictive-kinship slave-shipmate bond that was the atom of the African-Caribbean kinship and marriage system (Mintz & Price 1992, Besson 1995a).

Such themes of endurance and transformation are closely related to Fox’s theme of longevity-mutability. Yet the debate on African cultural continuities and Caribbean creolization (e.g., Mintz & Price 1992) is not addressed. Instead, there are assertions of African continuities that are not explored. These include the statement that the Jamaican “informal savings institution known as *pardner* (partner)” is an African survival (p. 115). Yet such gendered rotating savings and credit associations in the Caribbean reflect creolization (Besson 1995b). Likewise the assertion that Jamaican free villages are African-derived (p. 56) overlooks Caribbean peasantization (Mintz 1989, Besson 1992, 2002). Elsewhere in the book, too, general sources are sometimes drawn on instead of in-depth studies; for example, Eltis *et al.* (1999) would have been informative on the slave trade, especially as not all slaves imported to Jamaica disembarked at Port Royal (as implied on p. 52). My monograph on gendered rural life in Jamaican free villages (Besson 2002), based on fieldwork in Trelawny Parish, which experienced intensive plantation slavery and peasantization near Frankfield, might also have been useful.

Despite the focus on Rastafarian masculinity and Nanny the Maroon’s femininity in gendered Jamaican history, Fox’s discussion of maroons is flawed. Cudjoe, who signed the treaty of March 1739, is presented as leader of the Windward Maroons in the eastern mountains (pp. 66, 223 n. 6), whereas he was leader of the Leeward Maroons in the west-central mountains (Besson 1997, Bilby 2005, Campbell 1990). The First Maroon War was waged by the British colonists against the Leeward as well as the Windward Maroons and not just against the Windwards (p. 223 n. 6). The Windward

treaty was signed in June 1739 not 1730, and it was the Leeward (not the Windward) treaty that established maroon lands in the Cockpit Country (p. 223 n. 6). My study of the (Leeward) maroon society of Accompong is misquoted and mis-referenced. Regarding Nanny (symbolically appropriated by the Leeward Maroons from the Windwards), I wrote that “stones likewise mark her reputed grave” (Besson 1998:140), not “‘stories likewise mark her reputed grave’ ([Besson] 1998, 144” (p. 68). The reference (p. 223 n.3) to my reputed use of “loose community” for “Rastas” (Besson 1998:144) is inaccurate; I referred to a “Rastafari network.”

Fox makes multiple references to the themes of respectability and reputation, but says nothing about these gendered concepts as Peter Wilson (1973) first developed them or the related debate (e.g. Besson 1993, 2002). This debate would have illuminated Fox’s interpretation of dancehall, the houseyard, and “aggressive street and male cultures” (p. 211), underlining culture-building by African-Jamaican women as well as men.

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Women in Grenadian History, 1783-1983. NICOLE LAURINE PHILLIP. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2010. x + 204 pp. (Paper US\$ 27.00)

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In *Women in Grenadian History, 1783-1983*, Nicole Laurine Phillip explores the experiences of women in Grenada from slavery to modern times. A product of an interest she had since she was an undergraduate student at the University of the West Indies, the book seeks to present “a picture of Grenadian society through the eyes of women estate workers, domestic workers, teachers, civil servants, doctors, lawyers, revolutionaries and politicians” and thereby “seeks to capture the story of Grenadian women in all its riches and complexity” (p. 2). This is a monumental task because the Windward Islands have been sorely neglected in Caribbean historiography, and the data required to conduct a serious pioneering study of this kind are difficult to assemble.

Based on primary and secondary sources, as well as personal interviews that Phillip conducted with women aged 75 to 90, the book is divided into a brief introduction, six chapters, and a conclusion. Regrettably, neither the

introduction, which highlights the main aspects of the book, nor the first chapter, which gives a historical background on Grenada, offers a review of the literature on women or gender, which would have enabled readers to assess Phillip's contribution. The remaining five chapters, which concentrate primarily on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are arranged chronologically: one on women in slave society (1783-1838), three on women in the postemancipation era (1838-1899; 1900-1950; 1951-1979), and one on women in the Grenadian Revolution (1979-1983).

Though informative, Phillip's single-chapter treatment of enslaved women in Grenada lacks depth and the kind of rigorous, sustained and detailed treatment such a subject deserves. Most of her data come from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and this may have led to a circumscribed treatment. Also, there is an overreliance on the works of Hilary Beckles and a glaring neglect of more recent studies of gender and slavery that would have given the book a comparative perspective. Even so, Phillip investigates many of the same themes, and reaches strikingly similar conclusions about the social conditions of enslaved women as those pursued by other scholars, albeit with less evidence. These include the arduous labor that enslaved women performed despite inadequate and poor diets, the physical abuse to which they were subjected, the forms of resistance in which they engaged, and their prospects for manumission.

In Grenada, women outnumbered men in the field gangs after 1800. Phillip uses statistics from the Lataste Estate in the parish of St. Patrick which indicate that enslaved males were the majority of field laborers in 1789. By 1804, however, data from the Lower and Upper Pearls Estates in the parish of St. Andrew show female majorities in the fields (p. 20). As elsewhere in the region, enslaved men monopolized the specialized tasks and were the carpenters, blacksmiths, and coopers (pp. 20-23). Also, although women were valued primarily for their labor, they were still expected to reproduce. However, the slave population did not reproduce itself biologically; indeed, slave registration records show that there were more deaths than births in the period 1817-1833 (p. 24). With regard to resistance, women engaged in *marronage* – the most popular form of resistance – malingering, feigned illness, acts of poison, and arson. In 1823, for example, an enslaved woman named Germaine “was given fifteen stripes for willfully destroying canes in the field and for general neglect of the duty” (p. 34). Not surprisingly, mixed-race women obtained freedom more frequently than black women (pp. 36-37).

In the postemancipation period, women in Grenada had limited options, made worse by gender discrimination and their perceived inferiority to men. After 1838, some remained on the estates where they were as vulnerable as previously to sexual and other abuses. Others worked on family land or on land they purchased on their own account, becoming entrepreneurs cultivating and marketing cash crops such as nutmegs, bananas, and cocoa. Still

others migrated in search of domestic and other types of employment, first to Trinidad and Tobago, British Guiana, Cuba, Panama, and Aruba, and later to Britain, Canada, and the United States. Phillip is at her best when describing the endeavors of these women who struggled against the odds, worked for lower wages than men, educated their children, and provided for a better future. The example of Frederica Lewis, who worked on the Pleasance Estate from the 1940s to the 1990s and raised five children whom she sent to secondary school, was fairly typical (p. 60).

With the rise of trade unionism, party politics and the emergence of Eric Gairy's Grenada People's Party in the 1950s, women formed self-help associations (such as the Home Industries' Association where they could acquire craft skills), and moved into the public sphere where some occupied high public office such as governor of the island and ambassador to the United Nations. Core supporters of Gairy, women made further strides under the New Jewel Movement which overthrew him in 1979. Backed by an impressive array of photographs of Grenadian women who came to prominence through political activism or other means during this era of the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG), Phillip makes an original and important contribution by identifying them and illuminating their work. They formed the Women's Desk and the National Women's Organization, took an active role in trade unionism, and initiated maternity leaves and equal work for equal pay. They also participated in public works projects, introduced immunization programs for children, and joined the militia and the army (pp. 119-35). Were it not for the U.S. invasion of October, 1983 which brought the strife-prone PRG to an end, the string of achievements that women could boast might now be longer.

An easy read, *Women in Grenadian History* is uneven in dealing with the experiences of women and lacks critical analysis throughout. It is, however, a very useful work from which undergraduates and lay people will benefit. Phillip deserves credit for taking gender studies one step further.

British-Controlled Trinidad and Venezuela: A History of Economic Interests and Subversions, 1830-1962. KELVIN SINGH. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2010. xiii + 294 pp. (Paper US\$ 44.00)

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Analyses of the political, economic, and diplomatic relations between two countries are the traditional stuff of international history. Kelvin Singh of the History Program at the University of West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad has, however, taken a unique approach in his study of bilateral relations between Trinidad and Venezuela. This book is a study of how a British colony struggled to assert its presence with an independent state. Singh emphasizes that Venezuela must be seen as a Caribbean country and not just a South American country or a major oil-producing nation situated within the constellation of the United States. His insights are undergirded by impressive archival research in Trinidad, Venezuela, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

At their closest point, Trinidad and Venezuela are separated by only thirteen kilometers (about eight miles) of seawater. The two nations share the Gulf of Paria, which has significant oil deposits; and Venezuela's great Orinoco River, which drains deep into northern South America, exits in front of Trinidad. As Singh notes, for the British, Trinidad was to Venezuela as Gibraltar was to Spain. As the preeminent global power of the nineteenth century, Britain used its control of Trinidad to meddle in Venezuela's internal affairs, dominate its trade, and counter the growing power of the United States in the Caribbean region. Venezuela, which was politically unstable in the nineteenth century, often fell in arrears on paying the interest and principal on loans it had contracted with British banks and investors. British warships engaged in "gunboat diplomacy," with shows of naval force along the Venezuelan coast. In 1902-3, British warships blockaded Venezuela's ports. And for more than one hundred years, London permitted Venezuelan insurgents to use Trinidad as a staging ground for attacks on the central government in Caracas. British policy was aimed at keeping Venezuela weak, dependent, and incapable of contesting London's fiat on the proper boundary between Venezuela and its eastern neighbor, the colony of British Guiana.

The United Kingdom's policy toward Venezuela shifted in the twentieth century, reflecting changes in the global and regional balances of power. In 1895, the increasingly powerful United States forced London to resolve the

boundary issue between Venezuela and British Guiana, albeit on terms favorable to the British colony. President Theodore Roosevelt also demanded in 1903 that the British lift the naval blockade. In the 1920s Venezuela became a leading producer of petroleum, and foreign oil companies, such as the British-Dutch combine, Royal Dutch Shell, invested heavily in Venezuela. The Foreign Office in London then decided it would be wise to conciliate Venezuelan strongmen, like Juan Vicente Gómez (1908-35). During World War II, the United Kingdom became critically dependent on Venezuelan oil. London responded to Venezuela's support by conceding Venezuelan control over the islet of Patos in the Gulf of Paria.

The Foreign Office's policies at times coincided with the aspirations of Trinidad's merchant elite and their colonial representatives, the governor-general in Port-of-Spain and the Colonial Office in London. Merchants desired a flourishing trade with their larger neighbor, and colonial officials averted their eyes, as traders conducted an extensive smuggling trade with Venezuela. Merchants also envisioned Trinidad as a lucrative transshipment point for goods from the Caribbean into Venezuela. But, in the 1880s, the government of Antonio Guzmán Blanco (1879-84) responded to the constant British meddling in Venezuelan politics by imposing a 30 percent surtax on transshipped goods. For the next eighty years, the Colonial Office and Trinidad's merchants beseeched the Foreign Office to pressure Venezuela into repealing the surtax. But the Foreign Office became less interested in the issue as Venezuelan oil became more important to the British economy. As Singh notes, the United Kingdom's policy always favored metropolitan interests (London) over insular interests (Trinidad). In the twentieth century, the Foreign Office usually won debates with the Colonial Office on issues affecting Trinidad's relations with Venezuela.

Although this is a unique piece of scholarship, Singh has taken a traditional approach to his subject. Responding to criticisms that they were methodologically out-of-date, historians of international and diplomatic history have revolutionized the field in the past twenty-five years or so, adding, for example, categories of race, gender, and ethnicity to their analytical toolboxes. British officials, both in London and Port-of-Spain, quite obviously took a patronizing tone toward Venezuelans. In 1880, a colonial official labeled Venezuela "the scene of perpetual revolutions" (p. 48). Singh does not, however, pursue the cultural meaning behind such condescending comments. He confines himself to political and economic analyses. Too often, the text is filled with accounts of "what one clerk told another clerk."

This otherwise worthy study also needs an epilogue. When Trinidad gained its independence in 1962, some of the key issues – contraband trade, illegal immigration, the 30 percent surtax – were still festering. Readers will want a brief synopsis on how the two independent nations have addressed these issues over the past five decades. The book ends, however, with the

weak, disappointing statement that only “time would reveal” how “the leaders of the island and mainland would deal with the mutual issues affecting them in the new era of island independence” (p. 225).

Export/Import Trends and Economic Development in Trinidad, 1919-1939.
DODDRIDGE H.N. ALLEYNE. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press,
2010. xvii + 355 pp. (Paper US\$ 45.00)

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Although researched and submitted as a thesis to Oxford University in 1958, the contents of this book remain as relevant and useful to scholars today as they were fifty-three years ago. The book offers more than its title suggests, for it discusses the development of the economy of the unified colony of Trinidad and Tobago (rather than only Trinidad) during the interwar period. Organized into nine chapters, it examines the main exports and the interplay of the forces that had impact on the trade of the colony's export-based economy. Two primary influences are identified: external influences (namely world economic forces operating in a period that was characterized by depression and sharp fluctuations in world trade and commodity prices), and internal influences (including the reactions of the internal economy to the external trade factor and the impact of purely internal matters on the trade statistics).

Essentially, this is a study of the economic history of the colony, centered on the struggles of an agricultural economy in an era of depression in which the interplay between prevailing external and internal forces is reflected. These struggles are couched in the context of an emerging petroleum sector, which, despite facing its own ebbs and flows of fortune, came to rescue the colony's economy and to dominate its exports. In the process, Alleyne provides a detailed exposé of the nature and organization of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago and the strengths and weaknesses of its elements. He also traces the trajectory of its fluctuating fortunes during the period under study. While each sector of the economy is described in detail, their operations remain contextualized so that the individual experience of each subsec-

tor, their interrelationship, and the collective impact of their varied movements on the operations of the economy as a whole are explained.

With respect to the experience of the three main export commodities (cocoa, sugar, and petroleum), Alleyne identifies five distinct phases across the period under study – three of prosperity and two of depression. In examining the contributions of each commodity to the total value of exports, he notes that change occurred in the composition of exports, and more importantly that the colony's economy remained characterized by imbalance. First there was the imbalance created by overdependence on one commodity. Initially in the agricultural sector, it was cocoa, and then sugar. In the case of cocoa, export earnings were not used to strengthen the foundations of the industry, which could not withstand the negative development on the world market during the depression years. Then dependence on agriculture was replaced by dependence on petroleum, and the resulting movement from local to foreign ownership intensified the flow of profits abroad.

The study includes a discourse on the colony's labor situation. This begins with an outline of historical influences such as immigration and indenture-ship, and goes on to discuss the factors of population growth, health and education, the varying and sometimes competing demand for labor posed by the various sectors of the economy, public finance, and governmental policies. Wages, working conditions, and the labor struggles of the period are examined. Alleyne notes that the position of labor deteriorated as imbalances occurred in the economy, and argues that labor discontent, particularly that of 1937, marked an era of transition for the development of both labor and politics. These disturbances, he suggests, contributed importantly to the growth of trade unions in the colony.

Alleyne posits that the interwar period witnessed a transition from an economy dependent on agricultural exports to one that was mainly dependent on petroleum. The accompanying shift from local to foreign ownership of the chief export industries was caused by a decline in the main agricultural industries and the expansion of petroleum production. The decline of the cocoa industry resulted from the interplay between local and international forces as the price on the world market fell, due to increased production from West Africa and the decline in demand from some importers. Unfavorable market conditions revealed and aggravated the internal weaknesses of the industry. The sugar industry, which remained largely stable, was rescued at critical times by imperial preference. Contrary to cocoa, sugar production increased as prices fell, so that the net earnings from exports of sugar remained stable but "the industry was, however, inefficient both in field and in factory when compared with say, Cuba and Puerto Rico" (p. 289) and the process of amalgamation of the sugar industry was carried even further during the interwar years. Alleyne argues that there were no real worthwhile alternatives as fluctuating export prices also beset the minor agricultural

industries. The economy was gridlocked by the tendency to become more oriented to foreign ownership of productive resources both in mining and agriculture. The sugar industry needed capital to improve efficiency. Thus the more capital-intensive economic activities were engaged the more the economy depended on foreign sources for the required finance as there was no internally generated capital for such undertakings. This trend was further strengthened by the government's debt policy from the 1930s when loans were issued in London rather than at home. The absence of long-term government planning based on stable revenues was identified as one of the most important shortcomings of the interwar period.

The book is strong on the histories of the major industries. It provides some analysis of governmental policies in the petroleum sector, but does not scrutinize health and land issues facing the working classes in a critical manner. Despite its shortcomings, it provides valuable information on the history of the economic development of Trinidad and Tobago. Added value is provided in the four appendices, which present important statistical data that will be useful to any researcher on the history of Trinidad and Tobago.

Post-Colonial Trinidad: An Ethnographic Journal. COLIN CLARKE & GILLIAN CLARKE. Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. xxii + 246 pp. (Cloth US \$85.00)

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On January 27, 1964, Colin and Gillian Clarke arrived in Trinidad to conduct ethnographic research on ethnic politics and creolization. Their study was supported by the Research Institute for the Study of Man, whose director, Dr. Vera Rubin, had noted that research on rural Trinidad "had emphasized East Indian isolation, cultural retention and hostility to Creole domination" (p. 1). The Clarkes therefore asked, "Were urban East Indians the same?" (p. 1). On August 31, 1962, Trinidad and Tobago transitioned from being a colony of Britain to being an independent country in the Commonwealth. How would the two dominant ethnic groups in Trinidad, East Indians and Afro-Creoles, negotiate the politics of this moment? Although the Clarkes "suspected that cultural

differences – and racial exclusiveness – between Indians and Creoles had not been eradicated” (p. 7), their research was aimed at understanding the extent to which creolization among urban Indians differed from that documented in rural Indo-Trinidadian communities. *Post-Colonial Trinidad* is the publication of the ethnographic journal that was produced during their fieldwork in Trinidad, from January 28 to September 12, 1964.

The book’s introduction provides an overview of the ethnographic setting and reviews literature related to Indian ethnicity and creolization in Trinidad. Chapter 2, “Settling In,” marks the beginning of the ethnographic journal entries and gives an account of the Clarkes’ initial contact with Trinidadian people and culture. The longest chapter, “Taking Soundings,” records observations from experiences in the field – weddings, religious rituals and commemorations, social gatherings, and political rallies. The journal concludes with “Conversations” – notes from individual and group interviews with cultural consultants.

The Clarkes produced a richly detailed snapshot of urban Indo-Trinidadian life in 1964. Given that Hindus constituted the demographically largest group within the Indo-Trinidadian community, there is an abundance of data about Hindu life, rituals, and identity. The Clarkes recorded the tensions between different sects of Hinduism, ideologies of caste and equality, familial relationships and structures, community organization and obligation, the overlap of religious and secular education, and the intersection of ethnic, religious, and national identities. There is also considerable attention to the position of Christian and Muslim Indians within the framework of the Indian community and the larger Trinidadian population. Through almost daily journal entries, the Clarkes impressively recorded the complexity of this newly postcolonial plural society, and the micro- and macro-level debates about how the new nation would be constructed and the extent to which conflicting ideas about difference, hierarchy, service, and power were being negotiated in tandem with concerns about modernity, tradition, mixing, and purity.

Attitudes toward interethnic relations are recorded in many of the journal entries. In the June 18 entry, Colin Clarke notes, “Racial feeling is strongest among Indians. Hari Maharaj commented, ‘everywhere there are blacks in the world there is trouble,’ and it is likely that this is the opinion held by most Indians in Trinidad. Blacks display a contemptuous disregard for the Indians. There is no need for open hostility, since they are in the majority” (p. 135). In a plural society, these racial attitudes are not uncommon. What is significant, however, is that Trinidad has not erupted into the ethnic violence experienced in Guyana, a similarly plural society. Trinidadian ideologies and structures that fostered positive relationships across ethnicity could have been more deeply investigated.

Given that the Clarkes are white and British, I was also interested in the extent to which their identities affected their research on interethnic relations

and creolization in a nation newly independent from British colonialism. Since anthropological debates about self-reflexivity primarily took place in the 1980s, it is not surprising that this is hardly addressed in the journal entries written in 1964. Yet, the Clarkes note in the introduction to the journal (presumably written within the last few years), “while we can claim with some authority that the journal is not about us, we cannot deny that it is about Indians and Creoles in San Fernando and the adjacent area, filtered through us” (p. 17). The publishing of this journal presented a wonderful opportunity to reflect upon and analyze how that “filtering” took place and the implications of their racial, national, and class privilege in a society that was, and in many ways still is, suffering from a legacy of Eurocentric bias. This was a missed opportunity.

Post-Colonial Trinidad raises important questions about ethnography. One’s field notes have historically been private affairs where the researcher records detailed observations, emergent ideas, and very preliminary theories that, over time, are revisited, revised, questioned, or complicated. They are also where the challenges and frustrations of immersing oneself in the culture of the field site are recorded. It is often that which one draws from in the production of something else – a conference paper, a journal article, a monograph. The publication of the journal forty-six years after it was originally written entreats us to discuss the function and, ultimately, the disposition of field notes. What does it mean for a private document to be made public? What are the ramifications for people in the field whose controversial opinions might be revealed without the cover of pseudonyms?

This book is an important contribution to Caribbean anthropology, detailing many of the nuances and contradictions of creolization in early postcolonial Trinidad. The 2010 election of Indo-Trinidadian Kamla Persad-Bissessar as prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago, heading a multi-ethnic coalition government, demands that we continue to examine the complex nature of interethnic relations in Trinidad. I recommend *Post-Colonial Trinidad* for its value as a window into the thoughts and landscape of a plural Caribbean society at an important historical moment – independence from colonialism – as well as for provoking debate and self-reflection about the ethnographic process and our relationship to those in the field.

Poverty in Haiti: Essays on Underdevelopment and Post Disaster Prospects.
MATS LUNDAHL. Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. xix + 282
pp. (Cloth US\$ 100.00)

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In this volume, Swedish economist Mats Lundahl offers a compilation of his articles on Haiti's contemporary predicament. The theoretical and explanatory framework informing these articles published over the past twenty years does not depart from Lundahl's previous and well-known writings on Haiti. Embedded in neoliberal political economy, his analysis suggests that the country is a "failed state" mainly because of two fundamental domestic factors: "population growth and political irresponsibility" (p. xvii). On the one hand, population pressure in Lundahl's view has had profoundly negative consequences as it destroyed the soil, both prompting the utter decline of agriculture and precipitating a massive and chaotic urban migration. On the other hand, he argues that Haiti's self-interested politics has engendered a deep social fissure between rulers and ruled which in turn has contributed to the development of an unaccountable and kleptocratic state.

While Lundahl points out that the devastation caused by the catastrophic earthquake of January 12, 2010 may paradoxically offer an opportunity to implant democratic political institutions and foster sustained economic growth, he remains pessimistic about the likelihood of such a happy outcome. It is not just that he doubts political irresponsibility and population pressure will cease, but he notes that foreign assistance, which is absolutely essential for Haiti's reconstruction, has a record of failure. The question then is: what is to be done?

Despite his concerns about the ineffectiveness of international aid, Lundahl believes that Haiti is incapable of structuring its own way out of underdevelopment without the guidance of foreign powers. In his view, such guidance is especially critical in the aftermath of the earthquake and the country's turbulent and violent post-Duvalier politics. Haiti simply cannot extricate itself from its predicament alone. As Lundahl explains, "foreign supervision will have to continue for quite some time until it is certain that peace, democracy, and honesty have the upper hand over violence, dictatorship, and plunder. The entire history of Haiti is crystal clear on this point" (pp. 14-15). While it may be evident that Haiti needs to count on the solidar-

ity of the international community, it is hardly “crystal clear” that “foreign supervision” can generate the necessary environment conducive to governmental accountability and material prosperity. In fact, one does not need to “hate the United States,” as Lundahl claims, to argue that the history of such “supervisions” is at best mixed, if not altogether disastrous.

For instance, the first American occupation of Haiti, from 1915 to 1934, resulted in few achievements and left the country at the mercy of a centralized military that undermined any democratic alternative. Similarly, the more recent interventions of the United States, France, and the United Nations in the 1990s and 2000s have contributed little to Haiti’s economic development and democratic practice. If anything, foreign meddling has exacerbated internal tensions and fostered a thoroughly dependent mentality among government officials. Moreover, the economic policies favored by international financial institutions have emasculated state capacity and engendered what Haitians have called “*la République des ONGs*.” The inability of the Haitian government to deal with the devastation of the earthquake is symptomatic of this syndrome of dependence on NGOs and the international community. This very dependence is in great part the consequence of close to forty years of neoliberal economic policies that have privileged NGOs as recipients of foreign assistance and bypassed the state. In addition, the complete opening up of the Haitian market to external goods has had devastating results for local and state manufacturing as well as for agricultural production. An excellent example is rice, which used to be grown locally, but is now predominantly imported from subsidized American farms.

Since the Jean-Claude Duvalier era, neoliberal policies have also favored the development of the garment and textile industry as the prime vehicle for Haitian “industrialization.” While it seems clear that any strategy of development cannot ignore this sector, there are good reasons not to give it primacy. Not only does it rely on ultra-cheap labor, but even at its peak in 1990, it never created more than 50,000 jobs, as Lundahl acknowledges (p. 245). Moreover, its development has always been at the expense of the agricultural sector and especially domestic food production. Given this rather dismal record, it is surprising that Lundahl believes this sector to be the one that “deserves priority over agriculture and tourism” (p. 251). In fact, he seems to believe that garment and textile factories are capable of providing enough employment to absorb further migrations from rural areas, migrations that he describes as necessary and salutary. As he puts it: “People must leave the countryside. There is no way around it ... Any argument to the contrary is simply naïve” (p. 244).

Lundahl’s overall argument seems to lead to the continued espousal of old and failed economic policies. His approach echoes the recent report commissioned by the United Nations and written by the well-known economist Paul Collier who put forward the same agenda that the World Bank had favored under Jean-Claude Duvalier. These prescriptions are “old wine in

new bottles.” In addition, Lundahl goes too far in minimizing the deleterious consequences of imperial interventions in Haiti’s internal affairs. The reality is that in the past few years Haiti has become a virtual trusteeship of the international community. WikiLeaks’ recent release of secret “Haitian Cables” shows a preponderance of American influence in the making of Haiti’s domestic decision-making. This is not to say that internal politics is a mere reflection of the wishes of the United States, but rather that it is determined as much by foreign as domestic elites. Finally, where Lundahl is right on target is in his analysis of Haiti’s rulers whom he describes as predatory and self-interested. Whether the earthquake will contribute to changing the character of this class remains doubtful. As Lundahl concludes: “Does Haiti have a future? I wish I could be optimistic” (p. 261).

From Douglass to Duvalier: U.S. African Americans, Haiti, and Pan Americanism, 1870-1964. MILLERY POLYNÉ. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. xvi + 293 pp. (Cloth US\$ 69.95)

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Millery Polyné’s prevailing theme in *From Douglass to Duvalier* is Pan Americanism, which he defines as having two main variants. The first has historically served the interests of U.S. foreign policy in the Americas. The second is fraternal, and represents the democratic aspirations of the peoples of the Western hemisphere. Polyné adds a twist to the latter: black Pan Americanism characterizes the particular affinities surrounding the relationship between Haitians and those he calls “U.S. African Americans.”

Beginning with an account of Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide’s communications with African Americans following the coup against his government, Polyné traces the links between Haitians and African Americans from the late nineteenth century to the early years of the Duvalier dictatorship. The larger themes explore how Pan Americanism, thus defined, functioned in relation to nationalist and reformist narratives (both Haitian and African American); the role of imperialism; and the way in which liberals sought to resolve or reconcile exploitation with Washington’s democratic avowals.

The nineteenth-century material focuses more on the African American side and less on the contribution of Haitians to what Hannibal Price called "*La réhabilitation de la race noire*." While most Haitian polemics and criticism have historically addressed specifically nationalist issues, many also embraced a broad vision of both Pan Americanism and Pan Africanism. The late 1800s witnessed an outpouring of Haitian apologetics and analyses that foreshadowed modern debates about dependency and underdevelopment. They were written in the context of a global capitalism that was rapidly swallowing up agricultural producers outside of the industrial world. It would be fascinating to compare these texts to similar literature emanating from the United States during the period when Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois and others were mulling over the future of African-descended populations. Du Bois is oddly absent from this book as are certain contemporaneous Haitians. The contributions of Price, Anténor Firmin, and others would have benefited from more discussion. Firmin, for example, participated as a scholar in the short-lived American Negro Academy, the cosmopolitan aims of which seem tailor-made for this thesis.

Polyné chooses to skip the well-trodden topic of the U.S. occupation of Haiti but singles out a particular event that illustrates the black Pan American theme. President Herbert Hoover appointed Tuskegee Institute president Robert R. Moton to head a commission to investigate education in Haiti. At the moment it seemed that the better instincts of the U.S. government might prevail: under its aegis African American leaders could play a role in the modernization of Haiti. Unfortunately, the Moton Commission's findings were generally disregarded in Washington and the commissioners themselves were treated disrespectfully. Hoover's Good Neighbor policy, subsequently adopted by his successor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, was a product of Depression-era cutbacks and did not represent a permanent revision of U.S. policy toward Latin America. Polyné gives such historical actors the benefit of the doubt, however. Indeed, his book does not register the indignation frequently found in works about the trials imposed on Haiti. It optimistically suggests the potential for progressive stewardship in spite of much evidence that the U.S. government has had little interest in promoting democratic values in that country.

The book is an addition to recent literature that probes less understood episodes in Haitian history. Monographs that explore the years bracketed by the Marines' departure and the Duvalier regime now accompany the considerable work on the Revolution and the U.S. occupation. The 1940s and 1950s are particularly rich for the issues that interest Polyné. The arrival of Haitian painting on the world art market and *indigénisme*, related to the synchronous *indigenismo* movement in Mexico and other parts of Latin America, abetted a rediscovery of folk life. Polyné demonstrates how African Americans supported this development by advocating tourism and helping to mainstream Haitian cultural forms. He focuses especially on dance as a medium through

which Pan American exchange took place. The rich mid-twentieth-century epoch of art, music, dance, and ethnography ended with François Duvalier's ascent to power.

I am inclined to argue with Polyné's central premise that black Pan Americanism structured Haitian and African American relations. Even as generously defined, Pan Americanism always references nationalism and nation-states. It is based on the mutual relations of *sovereign* peoples. Thus, the comparability of an independent state with a racial-ethnic minority remains problematic, especially when elite figures are the focus of investigation. Polyné holds Duvalier-era repression responsible for the cessation of networking between Haitians and African Americans, a cooperation resumed only with Aristide. There may, however, be another explanation. Haitian Garveyism, for example, was weak not only because the occupation authorities opposed it, but because Haitians, in possession of their own country, had no need to redeem Africa. The ideology that sustained minorities and colonized subjects did not play out in the same manner in an independent black country, however troubled it might have been. This may help explain why Haiti in this narrative appears more important to African Americans than African Americans are to Haitians. The content is certainly more weighted to African American voices. Moreover, the instability of the categories "black nationalist" and "Pan Americanist" is suggested by the fact that at certain points Polyné identifies particular individuals as belonging to one or the other. At other points, however, figures first noted as black nationalists are claimed for Pan Americanism, depending on the era being described.

From Douglass to Duvalier is a provocative work that analyzes an understudied relationship and provides enough grist for continued research on the subject.

Haiti Rising: Haitian History, Culture and the Earthquake of 2010. MARTIN MUNRO (ed.). Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2010. vi + 200 pp. (Paper US\$ 25.00)

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Port-au-Prince, Haiti. January 12, 2010. When the ground stopped shaking, less than a minute after the earthquake began, hundreds of thousands of people were buried under the rubble. Well over a million others were left to camp out on the streets and pray for salvation. The *gwo katastrof* also created an exodus – in the days and months after the earthquake, people from the magnetic capital returned to their original hometowns across Haiti. I have heard friends, including a 22-year-old college student who crawled out of a house with nothing but managed to borrow money to make the twelve-hour trip by motorcycle and bus back to her home in northern Haiti, tell and retell their stories. But by mid-2011, the capital seemed to regain its pull, once again drawing young people back.

What was left, over a year after the quake, was the inevitable rubble in a country characterized by a gridlocked state government, foreign NGOs, and a massive stream of donations and pledges that never make it to tent cities. For the residents, what remained was the retelling of their stories, life hanging onto the hope of normalcy, and political disaffection.

Martin Munro's edited volume, *Haiti Rising*, brings together 25 writers to document, discuss, and contextualize the earthquake. While some of the entries are useful and refreshing, and two in particular are excellent, many of the chapters fail to say anything new and instead rehash critiques of international media, Haitian politics, and the details of the earthquake's aftermath.

What kind of justice does this book do to the earthquake experience, or to the experience of the people in tents? Individually dated, the essays were written on the heels of the event (between January and June 2010). But it seems that even five months is too soon to expect a fully developed analysis of such a catastrophe; writers are still processing the event and struggling to find useful ways to talk about Haiti in disaster.

Despite being published by a university press, the text is not purely academic. Munro lays out his threefold purpose: to acknowledge Haitian culture and history, to record testimonies, and to raise funds for Haitian artists. Much

of the cultural and historic information will be old hat to those who already know something about Haiti.

The book is divided into four sections. The first, "Survivor Testimonies," can be useful for other survivors who want to compare experiences, or for those unfamiliar with the obvious points to be made about disadvantaged Haiti – unfair media coverage, an unjust world system, disaster capitalism, social inequality, etc. Part Two, "Politics, Culture, and Society," includes essays by a number of influential scholars. Deborah Jenson's "The Writing of Disaster in Haiti" looks at Haitian representations of disaster in Haitian letters, including the writing of Louverture, Dessalines, writer Hérard Dumesle, and others. Jenson also alludes to the historic and often forgotten string of earthquakes in the region. This is easily one of the book's best chapters. Part Three, "History," offers useful context, though it tends to repeat well-known facts. Contributors include John Garrigus, Laurent Dubois and Jean Casimir, and Patrick Bellegarde-Smith. Part Four, "Haiti and Me," includes contributions by people with long connections to the country, among them Maryse Condé, whose essay is largely autobiographical.

The best chapter in the book is its last: "Port-au-Prince, I Love You," by Matthew Smith. This sort of heartfelt and well-researched history, offered next to post-earthquake landscape imagery, is an ideal form for contextualizing the *gwo katastrof*. Smith takes an imaginary walk through the city, recalling its names, places, people, and music throughout the years.

Only six of the contributors lived through the earthquake. Fourteen were not present, and readers can only guess where the other five were. For the best chapters, physical presence hardly matters; in other pieces, however, writers struggle with either a lack of data or the unwieldy emotional baggage that accompanies survival.

When it comes to discussing Haiti after the earthquake, eyewitness authority competes with the authority of those who were not witnesses but have other professional experience with Haiti. Scholars and Haitian-American friends have told me they wish they had been there, to experience the catastrophe in their field site or homeland. These regrets take survival for granted – the accident of time and place that survivors know intimately. Nonetheless, observing from afar has had major effects on the claims that have been made about Haiti during and after the event.

Clichéd critiques of CNN and the news media recur in the book, and contributors often draw on completely imaginary scenes to talk about what happened. Imagining the darkness of Port-au-Prince that night, as Bill Drummond does (p. 174), is quite different from living a night that was, indeed, very dark, except for the bright lights from the backed-up cars and trucks along the Delmas Road and other thoroughfares. The book allows space for its authors to record memories and feelings, and space to share the basics of Haiti with a broader audience. Its best pieces are those that avoid

the lesson of emotional pessimism taught by the disaster, those that find perspective and remember that Haiti is not just Port-au-Prince at 4:50 p.m. on January 12, 2010.

Faith Makes Us Live: Surviving and Thriving in the Haitian Diaspora. MARGARITA A. MOONEY. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. xi + 296 pp. (Paper US\$ 21.95)

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In this well-documented book, Margarita Mooney explores the meaning and power of faith for Haitian immigrants living in Miami, Paris, and Montreal, and compares the role of the Catholic Church in mediating the adaptation of Haitian immigrants in these very different settings. She focuses on the role of the Church as both a religious and social institution embedded in distinct cultural and political contexts which shape how the Church responds to the needs of immigrants. Haitian immigrants' experiences with the Church and the government in Haiti in turn influence what they expect from parallel institutions in the receiving countries. In addition, immigrants have particular histories and needs – most left their homeland in search of better economic situations or to escape political repression, and they are often undocumented and in need of assistance to rebuild their lives. Mooney notes that although Haitian communities in the three settings share certain features, the ability of the Church to mediate and advocate on behalf of the immigrants affects their integration quite differently and leads to different outcomes for the immigrants.

Mooney creates an intricate methodological and analytical framework to manage the complex set of variables that such a comparison generates. She uses concepts such as “cultural mediation” to show how faith and religious ideas infuse meaning into Haitians' narratives of migration and adaptation and “mediating structures” to refer to community and religious institutions that “help bridge the gap between individuals and state, creating a space where people can fashion their identities and create meaning in their lives” (p. 35). She arrives at an interesting set of observations and connections. For example, cultural notions such as the American melting pot, Canadian mul-

ticulturalism, and French republicanism shape the ways in which national, social, and religious institutions relate with the immigrants and these relationships in turn influence how Haitian immigrants are incorporated in each of the three societies. A comparison of interactions between mediating institutions and governmental structures in the three settings unveils a high level of cooperation in Miami, while tensions dominate the relationships in Montreal, and lead to invisibility in Paris. Such interactions suggest that Haitians would indeed create different coping mechanisms to “make it” and that they would have different levels of success adapting to each of the societies. Mooney illustrates her observations with ethnographic vignettes that offer valuable insights into the lives of Haitians in the three host countries.

The most interesting aspect of the book is its focus on the importance of religion in the lives of Haitians. Religious symbols permeate narratives and shape relationships between members of immigrant communities. Mooney demonstrates that Haitian migrants’ religious beliefs sustain them through the hardships of their often stark lives and give meaning to their suffering, their feeling of alienation, and their experience of racism. “God is good” punctuates conversations to convey that hope is still alive in the midst of chaos or that when all else fails, only their trust in God sustains them. Mooney also notes that the media portrayal of Haitians in Florida leads to the stereotype that depicts Haitians as mostly uneducated boat people illegally in the United States while the profile of Haitians in Montreal stresses their Francophone education and status as professionals. However, even though they come from a Francophone country, Haitians in Paris tend to be less educated than their counterparts in Canada and have greater difficulty integrating into French society.

The book is divided into five chapters and two informative appendices. Although Mooney devotes a chapter to each of the sites, her major focus and the strongest part of the book is the study of the Haitian community in Miami. Her ethnographic description of that community is rich and textured. She does a superb job of documenting the evolution of the community and the pivotal role that Notre Dame d’Haiti Catholic Church and the Toussaint Center played in helping Haitian immigrants through the chaotic wave of migration of the 1980s and the AIDS crisis. Her representations of the communities of Montreal and Paris pale by comparison. This could be construed as a weakness of the book but on the other hand, discussion of the experience of Haitians in Montreal and Paris provides an opportunity to compare the impact of three national models of immigrant integration on the successes and failures of one immigrant group. It also is an invitation for other ethnographers to fill the void and add to the ethnography of Haitian migration in other parts of the world. A study of the younger generation of immigrants would also be fruitful and could shed light on how changes in the receiving countries affect minority groups and whether, or how, Haitians find a permanent niche in foreign lands. Appendix A (“Methods”) is a welcome addition

to the book and provides valuable information and insights into Mooney's rationale for doing this kind of study and her entrance into each community. Appendix B ("Ayiti Cheri: Notes on the Haitian Homeland") provides a succinct summary of Haitian migration patterns and a quick discussion of the impact of Liberation Theology on Haitian contemporary politics.

Faith Makes Us Live would be a good addition to a class on ethnographic methods and could do quite well for a course on the Haitian diaspora and Caribbean culture. It should also be of interest to anyone interested in Haitian communities abroad and migration in general.

This Spot of Ground: Spiritual Baptists in Toronto. CAROL B. DUNCAN. Waterloo ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2008. xvi + 275 pp. (Cloth US\$ 85.00)

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This Spot of Ground is a fascinating ethnography that thoroughly explores the history, setting, and worshipers of the transplanted Spiritual Baptist Church in Toronto. Carol Duncan emigrated to Canada from the Caribbean as a child and has friends and acquaintances in the Spiritual Baptist religion in Toronto. She conducted her fieldwork over a period of about fourteen years beginning in 1992 in both Toronto and Trinidad.

"This spot of ground" refers, at least in part, to the attempt by displaced Trinidadians to lay a religious foundation in yet another new land. The Spiritual Baptist religion, from the point of view of the worshipers, originated in Africa, was brought to the New World by Africans during the Middle Passage, and became established in Toronto sometime in the mid-1970s. There are currently a number of Spiritual Baptist churches in Toronto, mostly founded by Trinidadians, who make up the bulk of their membership.

"Mourning" is featured prominently and illustrates many of the important themes discussed in the book. The mourning ceremony is a typical sensory-deprivation ritual in which the worshiper "travels" to virtually anywhere on the globe and meets a variety of spirits. Adherents will generally "mourn" once a year as doing so facilitates moving through the various ranks in the

Church. Upon completion of their spiritual travels, which may last anywhere from three to seven days or more in some cases, the returning “pilgrims” publicly report their experiences to the rest of the congregation during a service that is partly dedicated to that purpose. Mourning experiences are, of course, very subjective and personal, which allows some individuals to be a bit more “creative” than other worshipers can tolerate; for this reason, the Church can exercise its authority by “tempering” the more enthusiastic participants. Nevertheless, it is precisely this subjectivity that makes the mourning ritual such a powerful adaptive mechanism for Caribbean immigrants in Canada. Whatever the actual source of the information obtained during spiritual travels, it cannot be denied that it allows individuals, within limits of course, to “fit” themselves to a strange situation in a strange setting. Duncan discusses the themes of empowerment, travel, relocation, assimilation, and the “other” within the context of the culturally rich and personally meaningful mourning ritual.

The Spiritual Baptist religion, both in Toronto and Trinidad, is associated in a variety of ways with the Orisha religion. The Orisha religion in Trinidad and Canada is an African-derived religion which includes in its rites, beliefs, and liturgy several elements that closely resemble those of Orisha worship in the Yoruba culture of southwestern Nigeria. It is interesting that the perception of Orisha worship is quite different in Trinidad and Canada. In Trinidad, the overwhelming majority of Spiritual Baptists want to have nothing to do with the Orisha religion and bristle at the term “Shango Baptists” that outsiders sometimes use. In Toronto, at least according to Duncan, the Spiritual Baptists seem to be much more willing to respect and embrace, at least conceptually, the Orisha religion and its important deities. Alluding to the themes of relocation and assimilation in a new land (once again), it appears as though the (relatively) recently relocated Trinidadians in Canada, in an attempt to “ground” themselves in their cultural roots, have chosen not to downplay or ignore the Orisha religion the way the Spiritual Baptists in Trinidad have. This more pronounced tendency to associate with Orisha worship in Toronto notwithstanding, the Toronto Baptists do not appear to engage in actual Orisha worship or integrate the practices of this religion into their own.

Noting that about 90 percent of the Spiritual Baptists in Toronto are women, Duncan spends some time engaging in a socialist feminist analysis of “mothering work” there. She contrasts the low prestige, domesticated mothering work with the role of “mothers” in the Church, a title/position that is associated with a great deal of power and prestige.

This Spot of Ground comprises six relatively long but well-organized chapters. The first discusses Toronto as an “endpoint” in a journey that began in Africa, continued through the Middle Passage and the period of slavery, and persisted with the establishment of the Spiritual Baptist Church in Trinidad before appearing in Toronto; of particular interest here is Duncan’s

investigation of the social and ethnic positions of black Trinidadians in multicultural Toronto. Chapter 2 focuses on the Spiritual Baptist Church in Toronto as it functions to meet the needs of a diverse group of people immigrating from the Caribbean and the various stratagems employed by the immigrants to fashion a form of worship that addresses their specific needs. Chapter 3 considers the mediating function of the Spiritual Baptist religion for recent immigrants dealing with issues of employment, housing, etc. Chapter 4 focuses on the Spiritual Baptists' attempts to deal with the "tension" inherent in the dynamic that exists between grounding their identity on an African foundation on the one hand and forging a new life in a new land on the other. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss "mothering work" in both religious and domestic contexts.

Duncan's fine ethnography is well-researched, culturally rich, and intellectually sophisticated, making her book suitable for readers from a variety of academic disciplines. *This Spot of Ground* is highly recommended for anyone researching Afro-Caribbean or African American religious experiences in the New World.

Interroger les morts: Essai sur la dynamique politique des Noirs marrons ndjuka du Surinam et de la Guyane. JEAN-YVES PARRIS. Matoury, Guyane: Ibis Rouge, 2011. 241 pp. (Paper €20.00)

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The title "Interrogating the dead" refers to the ancient West African and Suriname Maroon custom of questioning the spirits of the deceased to establish the cause of their death. This inquest is conducted by fastening the corpse to a bier and raising it so that its two bearers can carry it on their heads. Questions are then put to the spirit by village elders and gravediggers. The movements of the bier are interpreted as answers to these questions. A chief focus of interest is the moral stature of the deceased: was this person a witch or a decent person, perhaps a victim of witchcraft? Until a few decades ago the "carrying of the corpse" was a normal procedure among the Ndyuka Maroons of southeastern Suriname. Today those Ndyuka who live in villages

below the Gaanolo-falls of the Tapanahoni River still perform the inquest, while those further upstream have discontinued the practice.

The first thing that strikes the reader is that this book is not about “interrogating the dead,” but rather about the debate engendered by suggestions from certain quarters that all Ndyuka should again resume this ancient custom. In the village of Moitaki, where Parris conducted most of his fieldwork, the persons interviewed were dead-set against any revival of such investigations. They pointed out that not only were decent persons convicted of witchcraft (Parris prefers the term “sorcery”), but their possessions were then confiscated by the priests of Sweli Gadu, a religious cult supervising all local investigations of this nature. The elders in Moitaki (translatable as “Judicious Talk”), didn’t even wish to debate the matter with the *Gaanman* (tribal chief); in fact what they presented the ethnographer with was a list of complaints about the chief and his people, points of view dutifully recorded by Parris, who deliberately abstained from cross-checking them with the accused dignitaries (p. 11).

The people of Moitaki appeared less than judicious when proclaiming that their clan, the Misidyan, was the most prominent among “The Twelve (clans),” a synonym for the Ndyuka nation. Most of their ancestors, we are told, had never been slaves (pp. 96-97), a rather remarkable assertion as all oral history accounts stress that the majority of the Misidyan were persuaded to leave the plantations and help their kinsmen in what appeared to have been a local fight for supremacy. This took place around the time of the peace treaty between Ndyuka and the planters (1760). Parris is at pains to point out that these biased historical views of the Moitaki elders should be understood as part of a political debate. Sure, but nonetheless, as he willfully abstained from collecting competing points of view, we are left with a distorted historical account. This becomes even more glaring when, on the basis of information given by Moitaki’s elders, the clans along the downstream part of the Tapanahoni River are portrayed as latecomers, arriving on the scene long after the Misidyan, and playing no significant historical role. But then, for once, Parris stepped in, and showed himself willing to concede that at least one of these clans, the Dikan, could have played a role of some importance. Again, when discussing the religious cults of the Ndyuka, he stresses the pivotal role of the Na Ogii and Sweli Gadu cults in Ndyuka history, whose shrines are located above the Gaanolo-falls. The third main cult, that of Agedeonsu, is mentioned between parentheses only (pp. 112-13). But then the shrines are located in the downstream area, so what can one expect?

However, we would advise readers not to be taken aback by this contorted historical account but to appreciate the book for its really valuable parts. For example, when Parris relates how elders gather in the morning around the ancestor shrine for prayers, libations, and other offerings, readers may well feel that they are present as well. One gets a vivid impression of this central

event, brought to life by a detailed and moving description of the stories of patients and other supplicants. What also emerges is that the most important political unit is a group of neighboring villages (*wan pisi wataa*, “same stretch of the river”) whose elders cooperate in performing the required rites.

The book is to be recommended for its careful description of the death rites and its account of the long and taxing mourning period among Suriname’s eastern Maroons. Too often, on the basis of linguistic similarities between Sranantongo – the Creole of the coast – and Ndyukatongo – language of the Ndyuka – the idea is proposed that, in a cultural sense, only minor variations distinguish coastal Creole culture from Ndyuka culture. But both the strategic death rites and the exacting period of mourning clearly differentiate Ndyuka culture from that of the Creoles. Parris’s fieldwork helps to dispel the myth.